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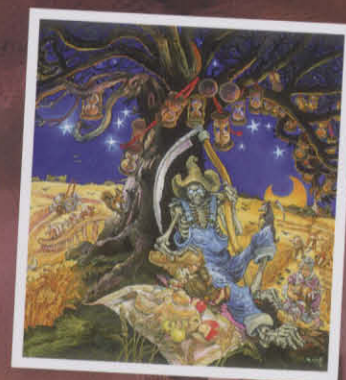
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

OUR SCARIEST WORKSHOP EVER?

ZOMBIES
FROM HELL
DRAWN OF THE DEAD!

THE ART OF DISCWORLD

Terry Pratchett on the
legendary **Josh Kirby**



**SPOT THE
ARTISTS!**

turn to page 62

Plus

**HOW TO PAINT
PERFECT LIPS**

DESIGN ROBOT
CONCEPT ART

**THE SECRETS OF
UNSHARP MASK**

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1 After the initial brief, Christian sends us early sketches, which are reviewed by the editor and art editor.



2 We do a quick paintover, showing that we want a sword or similar rather than a staff. The image is sent back to Christian for reworking...



3 Christian adds an axe, but we need the background a little darker...



Cover artist **CHRISTIAN ALZMANN**

COUNTRY: US

SOFTWARE USED:

Photoshop & Painter

WEB: www.christianalzmann.com



Each month on ImagineFX we get to work with some of the best artists out there. But this month we were just thrilled when Christian Alzmann agreed to paint

our cover and write a workshop for you on how he created the image.

Christian works at Industrial Light and Magic (ILM). He was an artist on Star Wars: Episode II, was Visual Effects Art Director on Van Helsing and War of the Worlds and has worked on numerous other blockbusters. Read all about his illustrious career on page 42. ●



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Featured artists

Every month ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and to share their techniques and inspiration...



Christian Alzmann



Christian's career got off to a flying start, as he was recruited straight out of college by Industrial Light & Magic. However, it hasn't all been plain sailing, and in our interview he reveals how he's come to learn the secrets of ILM's success. He's also written a workshop explaining how he created this issue's stunning Barbarian cover. www.christianalzmann.com



Nick Harris



Explore a different side of your creativity with Nick Harris's workshop on illustrating children's fiction. Nick has worked for many major publishers, and the story of Deity and Nighty will help explain the principles of the children's literature art form. http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/nickilluss_portfolio



Keith Thompson



Freelance artist Keith has produced concept art for books, role-playing games, video games and more. He's also had work displayed at the American Museum of Illustration. This month he produces a piece of robot art which he uses to help explain some of the processes that go into creating concepts. www.keiththompsonart.com



Aly Fell



Before taking a job in the video games industry, Aly was a freelance 2D animator, working mainly for children's animation company Cosgrove Hall. But Aly's Drawn of the Dead workshop this issue is a far cry from the likes of DangerMouse, as he recreates the pulp horror comic covers of the 60s and 70s. www.darkrising.co.uk



Marta Dahlig



ImagineFX regular and mistress of the brushes, Marta has a wealth of invaluable knowledge about various drawing and painting techniques. This month, she concludes her series of workshops about custom brushes with a look at the best brushes for painting natural environments. www.marta-dahlig.com



Josh Kirby



The late, great Josh Kirby was one of the most distinctive fantasy illustrators, his work became synonymous with Terry Pratchett's best-selling Discworld novels. As an exhibition of Josh's work continues, we talk to Terry about working with Josh. We also look at Josh's other sci-fi and fantasy illustrations. www.joshkirbyart.com



Welcome...

A bit of fantasy art nostalgia



If there's something vaguely familiar about this issue's cover, then my plan has worked. The idea when commissioning Hollywood visual effects artist Christian Alzmann (see page 42) was to pay homage to one of the greats of fantasy art. You've probably guessed who, but I'm not going to reveal the artist's name, as I have a little game for you to play.

If you turn to page 62 you'll find our cover art in its full glory. As well as the main reference I mentioned above, we've hidden four other 'Easter eggs' in the piece – elements from classic paintings, all of which have featured in our Legends features over the past 20 issues. See if you can spot them all.

On the subject of Legends, we've been speaking to Discworld author Terry Pratchett about the late Josh Kirby and his stunningly detailed fantasy paintings. Flick to page 52 to hear what he has to say...

As usual, we've got a fantastic and eclectic mix of digital painting workshops on offer this month, including my personal favourite, Drawn of the Dead, where top artist Aly Fell shows you how to create a scary pulp fiction cover. Enough from me – turn the page for full contents.

Cheers!

Rob

Rob Carney, Editor
rob@imaginefx.com

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Five things...

you'll find in this issue of ImagineFX

1 The great paintover debate
Are paintovers art, or are they a form of cheating? Go to **page 22**

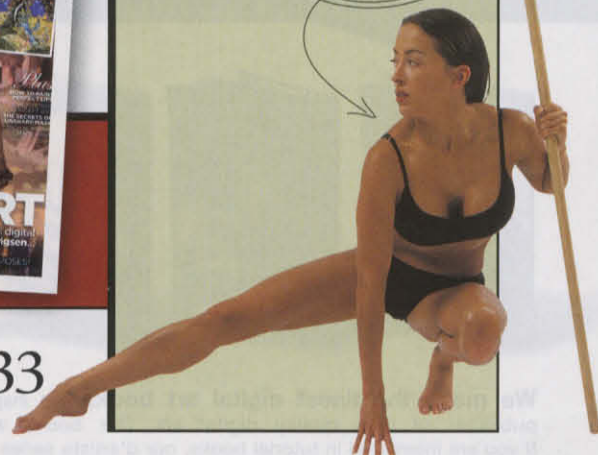
2 Luscious lips
Katarina Sokolova concludes her excellent face painting series with a look at lips. Turn to **page 80** for the finished portrait.

3 ZBrush 3
We put the eagerly-awaited update of the 3D modelling software to the test on **page 104**



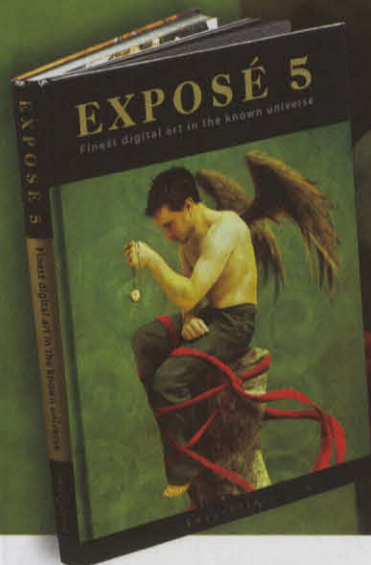
4 Fantasy art tips
Henning Ludvigsen shares his top 20 nuggets of advice for creating great fantasy art. Flick to **page 94** to share his wisdom

5 People in pants
Recreating the top ten fantasy poses to help you get your characters right. Turn to **page 100**



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United States readers turn to page 75



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
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Katarina Sokolova reveals how to paint lush lips in the last of her face series

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Children's illustrator Nick Harris creates art for a younger audience

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Henning Ludvigsen shares his top 20 pieces of wisdom for fantasy art

TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE ►



"Highlights are important. I want my zombie rotten and glistening" Aly Fell (page 70)

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"I enjoy making
images that ask more
than they answer"

Christian Alzmann (page 42)

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

Warren Hwang

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Warren's first illustration assignment was the cover image for a horror tale he had written. "It depicted a pivotal scene in which the exploited main character, a Christmas tree, wreaks bloody vengeance upon the people who mutilated it for their strange, celebratory purposes."

A meeting was called between his sixth grade teacher and his parents. The young artist waited patiently for the accolades and the cries of "Prodigy! Phenomenon! Genius!" Instead, his parents told him to stop reading so much Stephen King...

1 BAKU (THE DREAM EATER)

Sketched and painted in Photoshop. "The Baku captures a dreamer."

2 DUMP MINER PREACHER A

preacher from the world of the comic Dump Miner.

3 FALLEN VALKYRIE "Adorned with

the feathers from the Valkyries she has felled, skulls from Odin's own wolves, and the head of the ram from whom Heimdal's horn was crafted."

4 POST APOCALYPTIC SCAVENGER

Hux - A post apocalyptic scavenger piloting the Cherry Picker 4000, with his pet dog, Bernard.



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Warren Hwang wins a copy of Character Modeling 2, and Exposé 5, showcasing the universe's finest digital artists. Find out more at: www.ballisticpublishing.com.

2



3



Artist crit

Artist Keith Thompson gives his opinion of this piece



"The master-slave glove configuration of this artwork adds a conceptual detail as well as visual interest by mirroring the gesture of the robotic arms with the pilot's arms."

Turn to page 76 for Keith Thompson's workshop on robots



Beatrice Tan

LOCATION: Malaysia

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EMAIL: kidchanchan@hotmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter IX, Open Canvas 3.03E Plus, Deleter Comicworks



Beatrice has always loved drawing, and discovered digital art in a local comic magazine: "And ever since then, I tried to experiment a lot with software such as Photoshop and Open Canvas."

A beginner at that point, "I read a lot of workshops and also a lot of friends guided me. Self-exploring also helped me to understand. Then later, studying at an art college helped me to develop my own style, skills and concepts."

Beatrice chose fantasy or non-realistic themes as her subject, "since I like to daydream and imagine a lot."

"I think the road for artists is never ending; there are lots of different paths to be explored."

1 ARTIFICIAL MAIDEN Created entirely with Open Canvas 3.03E Plus. "I wanted to create an image of a maiden made of metals, but at the same time she resembles nature."

2 INSTINCT This piece was inspired by a friend's duelling Beta fish. "It's weird," says Beatrice, "how humans always hurt each other, even when they are special."

3 THE ASSASSIN A kind-hearted assassin. "I like designs of wayang kulit (shadow puppets) in my country. So I applied it on the background."



IFX INSIGHT



"What an original take on manga! I'm impressed with Beatrice's use of textures, motifs and Photoshop effects. Blood splatters treated like falling rose petals - love it!"
Paul Tysall,
Art Editor

1



Liu Yang

LOCATION: China

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"When I was a kid," laughs Liu Yang, "I loved drawing things everywhere." Walls or tables, it didn't matter. "My parents were mad at me," he adds.

Later, Yang entered university to study English, "but soon I found that painting was more attractive to me. I spent most of my time on it." He's now working as a freelance illustrator and concept artist.

The first time he saw people doing digital painting, Yang knew that was what he was looking for. "I can focus on the picture itself without worrying about the palette, canvas, or anything. Digital painting gives me the freedom to make the worlds in my dreams come true."

Both fantasy and sci-fi themes are interesting to Yang but if he had to pick one, sci-fi art would come out on top. "I love metal things, robots, aliens, future cities with flying vehicles and people in strange outfits. I'm always having weird dreams of all this crazy stuff."

1 LONG In Chinese, 'Long' means Chinese Dragon. "I want to make a picture of two warriors fighting in a fantasy scene," adds Yang.

2 KNIGHT "In this picture I wanted to create a character that looked like an Amazon warrior riding a monster-looking vehicle."

3 WALKING ROBOT This one's a simple concept: "A giant robot walking in a future city."

2



3



1



2



3



Scott Purdy

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Painter IX and Photoshop 7



How did Scott get into digital painting? "Well I guess after working in the role-playing game industry for a few years I realised

that pen and ink work was okay financially, but colour was the way to go," he reveals.

Rather than teaching himself the messy and expensive analogue way of painting Scott very sensibly decided to learn Painter. "Now, armed with Painter IX and a Wacom 3, I finally seem to be getting somewhere."

It's an odd combo perhaps, but, "I really enjoy painting monsters and portraits." Scott strives to get 'character' into the creatures that he paints and, he says: "If I could get a job painting either one of those subjects, I'd be content for life."

1 ALIEN DOOD A speedy Alien Dood.

"Here I was experimenting with a new brush that I created in Painter," Scott explains. "Recently I've tended to work on a few speed paints to warm up before I start a commission."

2 FUN TIME FRANKY A speed painting, just for fun. "This one came out of nowhere and is very different from what I normally do. Experimenting is half the fun of learning."

3 OLD TROLL This image was a collaboration with Larry MacDougall (www.underhillstudio.com). "He kindly supplied me with a sketch of one of his characters and enabled me to practise my painting on it" says Scott. "I'm always open to the idea of collaborations, they're always fun to do, and it's interesting to see how I interpret others' work with my paint."

IFX INSIGHT



"The Old Troll is fantastic.

There are plenty of fine details to mull over, such as the finely detailed hand. I do wonder what he's doing with the smaller trolls in his pack..."

Tom Rudderham,
DVD Editor

1



**Hector Enrique
Sevilla Lujan**

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SOFTWARE: Painter IX and
Photoshop CS



"I just started to do some digital colours," says Hector, "I'm new to this." Having always worked as a comic penciller, "colour theory, it's a new thing for me."

That's why this year Hector plans to go to art school, where he can get a better grasp of the basics. "A lot of people tell me to just work and forget about school but it's always good to go back and start learning all over again." Hector has a positive approach. "I think it will help me improve."

Hector's first professional work was for the book Lullaby. "Then I got lucky with a job for Konami on the Lunar Knights game in the US." And there's encouragement here for others too: "Remember" says Hector. "People are watching you over the net, so if you're starting out, like me, just work hard and editors will notice."

1 MAKE DAMN SURE "For this one I wanted to try saturation as a point of interest," says Hector. "The colours make you look at her face and torso while the texture and blurred things also add a lot of movement."

2 LUNAR KNIGHTS Having previously only done the pencilling for Konami, with this image Hector decided to try colouring for himself. This had previously been done by another artist, but as Hector concludes: "it came out pretty well."

2



1



Richard Johnson

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.terminalcondition.com

EMAIL: info@erthchronicles.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Graphic designer and illustrator Richard describes his painting process as "crashing the paintwork and spilling the pixels." He started his career in 1998 after winning the first D&AD Student Award for Most Outstanding Mixed Media Advertising Campaign For A Motion Picture.

Recently, he set up the website www.erthchronicles.com, a fantasy online collaborative project for writers and artists, and which is an extension of his first novel, *The Enemy's Son*.

1 DYSTOPIA: END OF THE WORLD

"As a graphic designer, I have a real passion for typography," Richard explains. "So I thought why not use this while developing a custom brush technique?" This was the result.

2 EARTH CHRONICLES: NEW HEIGHTS

Richard enjoys using primary photography to help ground images. "Sometimes I just manipulate the image, but for new heights I decided to recreate it as a digital painting."

3 EARTH CHRONICLES: OLD YANA AND THE GENERAL When writing *The Enemy's Son*, instead of using the leviathan, Richard developed a backstory of a cursed female who ends up breeding with the sea itself.

2



3



1



Agnieszka Szajewska

LOCATION: Poland

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2, Painter 7



Agnieszka's interest in fantasy stemmed from watching anime series when she was a child.

When Agnieszka was 17, her brother bought her a graphics tablet, "It was cheap, and not very good, but something new to me, so I was keen to get started with digital drawing." In no time at all, "I fell in love with the Undo button, layering, and other things unique to digital image production."

1 SILENT FAREWELL Two gods from a story of Agnieszka's. "This is the point in the story where Mizumi, god of darkness, dies."

2 EMBRACED Kerin is the god of destiny, and Agnieszka's favourite of her own characters. He's the creator of all gods and the world.

3 GOD OF THE LIGHT This is Raihyo: "He's god of the light - one of four gods who seek to neutralise forces prevailing the world."

3



2



1



Jon Oliver

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Jon was completely oblivious to digital painting until, "I was in my local newsagents and caught a glimpse of issue 4 of *ImagineFX*, featuring Jason Chan.

"I was instantly inspired by the extraordinary sci-fi and fantasy art and ordered a Wacom tablet that night." Although he still considers himself very much a beginner with much still to learn, "with online forums and amazing magazines such as *ImagineFX* I hope to improve my skills and make a career for myself out of digital art."

Jon's had a fascination with the weird and wonderful since a very young age and would spend hours drawing with his former favourite tool, the ballpoint pen. "Since then, painting digitally has enabled me to put down a vision or concept much quicker than with most traditional media."

There's no waiting for paint to dry, "or the horrible feeling you get when you realise you just ruined your clothes and carpet." Jon is currently producing artwork for the cover of a rock album for the band Skirtbox.

1 PICK AGAIN! For one of his degree pieces, Jon chose to redesign the book cover of Philip K Dick's brilliant novel *A Maze of Death*. "This is the moment where a Walker-on-Earth advises Seth Morley to reconsider his choice of noser aircraft."

2 THE STORY OF ADAM UNO A degree piece cover made to raise awareness of human cloning. "His body is disfigured and his brain is under-developed. Still, man can make money, so man will continue interfering."



Alan Down

LOCATION: England

WEB: www.bosseye.net

EMAIL: alandown@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop 6



Alan studied illustration at Falmouth College of Arts, but it was work experience at the now defunct Rage Games that tipped him to using the computer for creating images. "Painting digitally enables me to get what's in my head on to the screen, something which I could never achieve with traditional media," he explains.

Compared to oils and canvas, digital is a far less frustrating business, "and enables me to experiment far more with what I'm trying to create!" And for Alan that process means drawing his artwork in pencil first, "then I use an old version of Photoshop to add the colour. I really should buy a graphics tablet, but for now, it's all created using just the mouse. And that's it. Pretty low-key!"

Alan creates his artwork in his spare time; his dream is to be involved in concept art for films or games.

1 BLADES An attempt to create a more robotic character, "Something which I've never really tried to do." Alan adds, "I tend to go for more organic creations."

2 THE TRAVELLER This image was created for a graphic novel Alan started to draw. "One of the main elements I wanted to capture was the sense of isolation and the swirling snow."

IFX INSIGHT



"Blades is a great robot concept and you'd never suspect this was one of Alan's first attempts at creating a robot. The Traveller, meanwhile, captures a real sense of desolation."

Kay Inglis
Production Editor

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Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300 DPI TIFF or JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

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Alex Tornberg

LOCATION: Norway

IFX USERNAME: Alex_Tornberg

IFX GALLERY: http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/alex_tornbergs_portfolio

EMAIL: alext@funcom.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Upload your portfolio to our website at www.imaginefx.com and you could see your work grace these very pages, just like this month's winning artists...



Alex Tornberg is a 27-year-old illustrator, concept artist and art director. He's a Swede by birth but is currently living in Oslo, Norway, where he's working as a concept artist on Age Of Conan: The Hyborian Adventures for Funcom. During his spare time, he works as a freelance illustrator, and is art director for the upcoming pen and paper RPG Mutant Chronicles for COG Games. He's been drawing and painting all his life; he started out with crayons but today his main weapon of choice is Photoshop, or graphite on paper.



1 HEL "This one started out as an old pencil sketch that I wanted to do something more with," says Alex. So, six months after sketching it, he scanned it into Photoshop. "I tried a lot of new techniques on this one that pushed me a bit further as an artist. I don't really know how much time I spent on this, somewhere between ten and 15 days, I would guess."

2 JÖRMUNGANDR "As a follow-up to Hel I wanted to create a Jörmungandr, another monster from Norse Mythology," explains Alex of this fearsome sea serpent. "This one I did last summer, 100 per cent in Photoshop. I created some brushes with scale textures to get a nice skin texture on the snake. It probably took about ten hours to complete."

3 GIRL IN HOOD Alex created this piece purely for the fun of it: "Something to do after work, and test out some new Photoshop magic with," he smiles. He only spent about three or four hours on the character, before going on to experiment with textures. "I kind of like the end result, even though it might not be a very exciting piece," he concludes.



1



■ François Chollet

LOCATION: France

IFX USERNAME: Elgenor

IFX GALLERY: http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/elgenor_portfolio

EMAIL: stormragejunior@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Photoshop and Painter



François Chollet is 17 years old and lives in France. He took up art as a hobby three years ago and entered the digital realm a year later, when he was given his first Wacom.

"I've always been a big Photoshop fan, but I'm starting to use Painter more frequently - it's an amazing tool, and surprisingly powerful," François says. As for his inspirations, François cites Andrei Ivanchenko (aka Anry Nemo) as one of the first artists to grab his attention. However, new inspirations developed. "As soon as I started painting portraits, Linda Bergkvist became my idol."

1 ENT This was done with Photoshop 7, in about 12 hours. "I used a technique that is commonly used in speed painting," François explains. "It consists of starting out with completely random brushstrokes until the picture decides by itself what it wants to be. Quickly after starting, I had this vision of an Ent approaching the viewer, and I simply began to paint it." This was the result. "I was happy with how it turned out, particularly the high contrast in the piece, and I did my best to suggest a mysterious wood atmosphere, through lighting and colours."

2 FLOATING STRIPS This piece was also done in Photoshop 7, taking just under ten hours to complete. "The directive idea in this painting was to make the stillness of the female Samurai figure contrast with the movement of the floating strips of jagged cloth," says François. "It was done as a gift for a close friend of mine."

3 THE KING OF THE GLADE Although this image was partially done in Painter, François mostly used Photoshop 7. "It's the King of the Glade, waiting on his throne for ten thousand years, under an eternal rain of falling leaves - some kind of mythological scene, I guess," says François. "I think it exemplifies what I consider important in a painting: the atmosphere."

2



3



ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY





TOYS OF TERROR

Artist Atilla Adorjany is working on a number of exciting projects, including a new comic, and some terrifying toys created for For The Love of Munny. **Page 25**



DEAD FAMOUS

The latest line of trading cards from Topps depicts some well-known celebrities as you've never seen them before – turned into zombies. Cameron Demise, anyone? **Page 26**



GUITAR HERO, ART STAR

Paul Allender, lead guitarist with Cradle of Filth, is known for making heads bang, but has also produced some head-turning art, including DVD covers. **Page 28**

Are paintovers just a cover-up?

Is this art Digital paintovers and photomanipulation are a huge topic of debate in the digital art world, and can lead an artist into dangerous waters...

If there's one subject that's guaranteed to bring out the most vehement opinions of artists all over the net, it's the idea of paintovers. That means taking an existing image, usually a photo, and painting on top of it yourself to create something 'new.' It may be the basis of a whole picture, or perhaps just a detailed area; and the resultant image might look a lot like the original, or be unrecognisable. But the ethics of using paintovers are hotly debated.

Paintovers are subtly different from using reference material. Gifted indeed is the artist who can confidently create a detailed, expansive scene without the use of some sort of reference to gauge proportions and so on (see issue 17's news section for more on this topic). References are merely a guide, but paintovers could be seen as a crutch – or, at worst, simple deception.

Daniel LuVisi (www.adonihs.deviantart.com/gallery) is a digital artist who has most recently worked for Mattel, DC Comics and Acony Games, and his

the painting and saying they did it. Tracing the actual picture, then painting 100 per cent by yourself, I can live with. For practice? That's fine, but don't submit it on a forum or art site and say '100 per cent painted, done in two hours!'"

But not everyone is of the same mind. Lindsay Cormier (www.lindseycormier.com) specialises in fantasy and fairy art, particularly in traditional media such as watercolours, but isn't averse to using existing images for her digital work. "I



Daniel LuVisi, the creator of this image, is very sceptical about the use of paintovers, unless the artist clearly states this is what they have done.

“So many people get away with just tracing an image and painting over it”

opinion echoes that of many other artists. "I think a straight up, paintover-an-image process is a bunch of bull," he states bluntly. "So many people get away with just tracing over an image and painting directly over it – at times, even incorporating the image itself inside of

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

DAVE KENDALL

The Rusty Baby Studios artist discusses the ethics of paintovers

What are your thoughts on paintovers, or using photos as a basis for an image, in general?

I suppose I'm pretty old fashioned in that much of my work, including digital, starts off as a pencil drawing. That's not to say I don't use reference or other supports when producing an image. I just love working out how to depict a subject using pencil and paint, be it digital or the messier variety.

Is it acceptable to use someone else's photos as reference when doing a paintover?

I know a professional photographer and he puts as much work into his photography as any other artist. It's a case of giving credit where credit's due. From browsing forums, I think people get far more upset when Frazetta or Craig Mullins gets ripped off than a photographer. This shouldn't be the case.

Some would argue that even the great masters used pin-hole photography as the basis for an image, so is that any different to today's digital artists?

I love my digital camera. I tend to snap the most strange things knowing that they will provide inspiration. Digital illustration enables a lot of artists to speed their workflow. The danger comes when photography is used as a replacement for understanding your subject.



Dave is an artist and illustrator specialising in fantasy, horror and sci-fi, who has worked for clients including 2000 AD.

www.rustybaby.com

illustration by Dennis Brown,
www.bagger43.com

➔ Continued from previous page...

often use photos as reference, but sometimes I may use parts of photos in my digital paintings as well," she says. "I think it's acceptable to use someone else's photos provided that you give credit or use photos that are copyright free. I use my own photos as well as using someone else's (and give credit where credit is due) if I use paintover techniques."

This issue of proper attribution, and explaining your work in general, is perhaps the biggest bugbear. "I've seen valid proof of some paintovers that are *clearly* photos," Daniel believes. "Even using the photo's actual texture, I don't think it's right, unless in clear bold words you're saying 'I didn't 100 per cent paint this, I used photos.'"

Again, Lindsey disagrees. "I don't think artists need to state every part of their process, unless they have used someone else's photos and need to give credit. I see paintover techniques as just another tool in an artist's arsenal of techniques."

It's clear this debate will continue for a long time – so what do you think? Let us know on the forums at www.imaginefx.com.



Another image created by Daniel, who has seen proof some paintovers that are "clearly" photographs.

Nice gig if you can get it

Rock chic The art of music art, by one of its masters



Many rock music posters draw heavily on the genres of fantasy, sci-fi and horror, as Brian Ewing will attest. The famous music artist has just completed six posters for the Vans Warped Tour, an annual rock extravaganza in the US.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Brian has created the tour artwork, and they have become collectable items in their own right – with some fans even getting tattoos of Brian's designs. "You can make a



living as a [music] artist but nowadays an artist has to wear many hats in order to pay the rent," he explains. I'm the janitor and the CEO of my career. I deal with the art directors, printers, invoicing and shipping."

He says the best way to get into the business is to do it legally: "I contact the bands, their management, the label or the promoter to discuss doing a poster for one of their shows or for a tour. I started out doing flyers for my friends' bands, got a website, showed that work to touring bands and labels. It blew up from there, but didn't happen overnight." So is it difficult to get into? "I'll just say 'yes' to deter the competition..."

If you fancy giving Brian a run for his money, check out www.brianewing.com to see more of his illustrations.



Brian has just finished six posters for the annual Vans Warped Tour, above, while his past work has also included a special Slash poster for Guitar Heroes and Red Bull, which was auctioned for the charity Music Cares, and the promo poster for Senses Fall's new album, for Vagrant Records.

Making monsters

Beast building A complete guide to creating vile visions



Jim Pavelec purports to harbour "a firm hatred of humanity," but presumably that doesn't include artists

– as his latest project is a tour de force in creating monsters.

His new book, *Hell Beasts*, describes in gruelling detail how to draw a massive range of ungodly creations, from humanoid-style beasts to reptiles and aquatic creatures, across 29 demonstrations. Advanced tips include the use of point-of-view, iconic and action poses, colouring and shadow.

"I deal with fleshing out your concepts in pencil, as well as adding colour to your minions in both traditional and digital media," Jim explains. "This book is filled to



The taloned terror that is the Harpy is one of the beasts Jim teaches you how to draw.

Hell Beasts may just contain everything you need to know about creating scary creatures.

capacity with large full colour paintings that will please the eye of the dark fantasy connoisseur, and scare the hell out of everyone else."

Hell Beasts: How to Draw Grotesque Fantasy Creatures, ISBN 9781581809268, is published by Impact Books and costs \$20. For more info, see Jim's site at www.jimpavelec.com, and look out for a review of the book in issue 22.



Night terror

Dark tale New comic projects and more from an industrious illustrator

"It seems the only time I ever get a break is if I get sick," says Attila Adorjany, and he's not kidding. The



Canadian illustrator is going into overdrive.

"I'm currently wrapping up the first few issues of a comic called Night, a

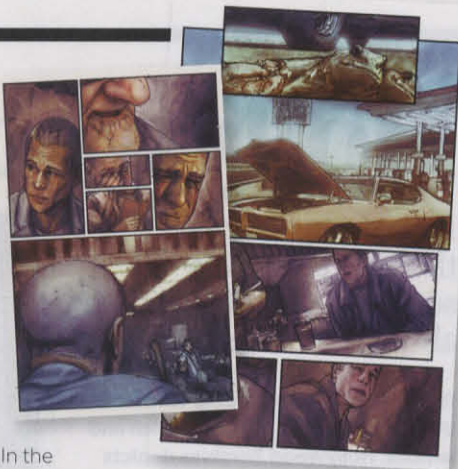
collaboration with Joe O'Brien," he says. "We're talking with publishers and trying to finalise release dates."

Night is set on an Earth which has been plunged into darkness for a year without anyone knowing why, until reporter AJ Strange begins to investigate and sets off

Sample pages from issue 1 of Night, created with Joe O'Brien.

a chain of terrible events. In the meantime, Attila will also be providing a cover and back-up stories for one of Joe's other comic projects, as well as working on two new solo ventures.

His other big love is toy figures, with recent contributions to several shows, including For The Love Of Munny in Florida. He's also finished the prototype for the first of his own figures. You can try to keep up with Attila's work at <http://freshandtasty.blogspot.com> and www.redesignthe.com.



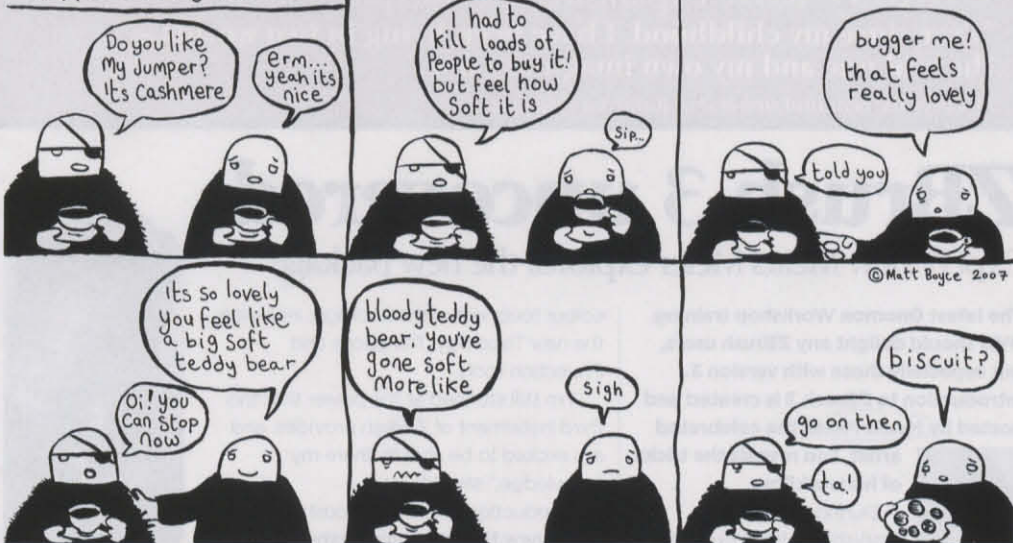
Doofus, one of Attila's toy figures designed for the show For The Love Of Munny at Florida's Bear and Bird Gallery.



Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce

Cuppa Sipping hitmen II



www.mattboyce.com



Call for entries

Strange challenge
Flex your film-making muscles



Ballistic Media and CGSociety have announced their biggest CGChallenge yet: Strange

Behavior. The focus is on film, with the three categories of Short Film, Animation and Illustration.

Nine sub-categories offer further scope for experimentation, with Screenplay Adaptation one of the most important as, for the first time, the Film category is based on a screenplay by a professional writer. "Using an actual screenplay places production teams into an environment which is very close to a professional working environment," says Mark Snoswell, president of CGSociety.

The closing date for entries is 29 October, so you'd best get moving. For full details, go to http://features.cgsociety.org/challenge/strange_behavior/index.php.

In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists

Training website Gnomonology

The Gnomon Workshop, purveyor of fine training DVDs, has launched a new website to deliver downloadable tutorials and assets from professional artists such as

Alex Alvarez, Meats Meier and Scott Spencer. The idea is to provide specific video tutorials for a particular task at affordable prices,

ranging from \$5 to \$15 – and also to stir up interest in the full DVDs, of course.

<http://gnomonology.com>

Modelling software Get Bryce 5.5 free

DAZ Productions has made an older version of its landscape modelling program Bryce available for free download. Version 5.5 can be had for both Windows and Mac, with the only stipulation being that you must register to get a serial number. Upgrades to the latest version (6) are also available for \$40.

www.daz3d.com

Console software Create with Colors

Got a Nintendo DS? Is it homebrew-enabled (in other words, can it run unofficial software)? Then you might want to check out Colors, a digital paint app that's like a simple version of Painter. It currently features a

512x384 image area with a plain circle brush and variable pressure – not bad for the little handheld.

www.collectingsmiles.com/colors



Image by Mattias Snygg

Hollywood Zombies

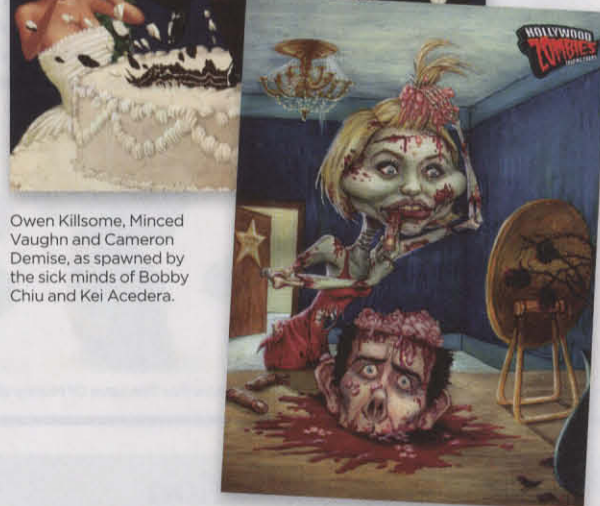
Dead famous Ever thought there was something a little strange about celebrities...?

Topps' latest line of trading cards in the US takes a skewed look at the rich and famous. Hollywood Zombies depicts the likes of an undead Tom Cruise, Michael Jackson and Paris Hilton with the names Tom Ooze, Wacko Jacko and Paris Hellton.

Bobby Chiu and Kei Acedera of Imaginism Studios were two of the artists commissioned for the series, parodying Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson, and Cameron Diaz respectively. "I had heavy deadlines at the time this series was being produced but it sounded like too much fun to pass up," says Bobby.

"A rough sketch was sent to us by the art director to show the basic elements that they wanted, along with the gag," Kei adds, "but the artists had the freedom to characterise the celebrities and paint them in their own style."

You can see the cards at www.hollywoodzombies.com and Imaginism at www.imaginismstudios.com.



Owen Killsome, Minced Vaughn and Cameron Demise, as spawned by the sick minds of Bobby Chiu and Kei Acedera.

Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable
"Ever since my childhood, I have been living in two worlds – the real one and my own imaginary one."

Discover the beautiful universe of Katarina Sokolova, p58

ZBrush 3 uncovered

Expert view Meats Meier explores the new package

The latest Gnomon Workshop training DVD should delight any ZBrush users, but especially those with version 3. Introduction to ZBrush 3 is created and hosted by Meats Meier, the celebrated artist, and reveals the tricks of his workflow.



During the six-hour workshop, Meats explains all the possible sculpting and

colour tools within the package, including the new Topology, Transpose and Projection tools.

"I'm still stunned at the power that this third instalment of ZBrush provides, and am excited to be able to share my knowledge," says Meats.

Introduction to ZBrush 3 costs \$49 from www.thegnomonworkshop.com. Turn to page 104 for our ZBrush 3 review.



Once upon a time...



Illustrations A fairytale of new art

When looking for inspiration, there's no reason why you should stick to the 20th century. Artist Agata Kawa has delved into Slavic folklore for her illustrations to *Rousalka*, a book of fairy tales written by her friend Damien Vaillant.

Inspired by the likes of Arthur Rackham and Kay Nielsen, Agata has created beautifully stylised, woodcut-style images. "I'm trying to have an uncluttered style and I think it's a very hard thing to get," she says. "You have to deal with the weight of the lines and the composition, and make them as balanced and elegant as possible. I'm always taking things off the image so that it doesn't look too 'Art Deco'."

She begins with a traditional pencil sketch which is then imported into Photoshop. "My idea is to get a very minimalist rendering and I add the most discreet and delicate textures possible. This is definitely my most personal project to date."

Agata and Damien have a publishing deal for *Rousalka* in France, but are also looking for international publishers and would welcome any feedback. To see more of her illustrations, visit Agata's website at www.agata-kawa.com.



Duddle double!

JONNY DUDDLE



Flicking through Digital Art Masters Vol 2, we found an image by Patrick Beaulieu (Fern) that looked familiar... Is that IFX regular Jonny Duddle? "I fail to see how someone as beautiful as myself can be associated with a funny 3D fella," jests Jonny. Oops. See more of Patrick's artwork at www.squeezestudio.com



FERN

Vue6

A New Dawn

The sky is *not* the limit.



www.vue6.com



Picture created by Jellits with Vue



Ultimate Vixen

3D contest Global search for the best 3D character artists

Book publisher Focal Press, in conjunction with ImagineFX, is launching a global contest for 3D artists. The competition is to highlight the release of *Virtual Vixens*, a book on creating perfect 3D female characters with advice from artists such as Steven Stahlberg and Sze Jones.

The contest is all about creating a virtual female character and there are two categories –



Professional and Hobbyist, each with a \$1,000 prize. Christine Veroulis, senior marketing manager for Focal Press, explains why they've launched this competition. "It enables us to

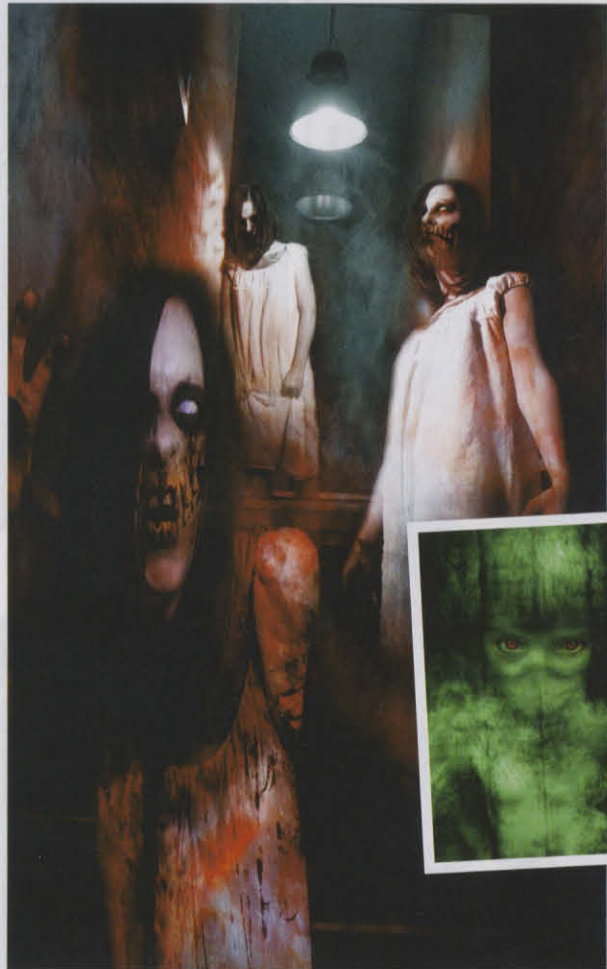
interact with and give back to the digital artists' community worldwide, and the winners will not only receive cash but will gain exposure among their peers."

The contest starts on 3 September and the winners will be announced on 7 December. Full rules are at www.focalbookstore.com/virtualvixens.

The *Virtual Vixens* book is out at the end of August and all qualifying entrants in the contest will get a 30 per cent discount off the book at www.focalpress.com.

From licks to pics

Heavy duty Band's guitarist is a dab hand at digital art



Heavy metal band Cradle of Filth may be best known for their over-the-top performances and music that purports



to celebrate all things wicked, but there's more to them than meets the eye.

Paul Allender is also a talented graphic artist, and since rejoining the group in 1996 after a four-year break has created most of their artwork.

Paul has produced, authored and animated the band's latest two DVDs, designed many of their T-shirts and created a website at www.cradleoffilth.com. As well as specialising in Photoshop, he's branched out into 3D with Cinema 4D and video with Final Cut Pro, After Effects Pro and DVD Studio Pro.

"A lot of fans know I do the designs for the band but some are still surprised when they find out," he says. "I suppose I'm self taught... When I came back to Cradle I used the skills I learnt working in a design studio for the band. I tend to be inspired by films more than people. I love films that have a lot of CG in them."

Most of Paul's work has been for the band, but with photographer Cindy Frey he has launched a website to showcase his own dark art. See more at www.paulallender.co.uk.

The work at Paul's website is intended to express "suffering and pain".



Small-screen Spidey

Game on Cartoon heroes – and villains

It's nice to imagine that being a game artist would be a time-rich luxury. Yet the reality is different, as character designer Dave Phillips will tell you.



He was recently approached to create characters for the Spider-Man 3 game on Wii and PlayStation 2. That involved designs for existing baddies Morbius and Shriek, as well as a host of menacing gang characters. All told, in three weeks Dave produced nine characters over 150 files and variations.

Although that gave little time for polish, he says there were upsides. "Occasionally you exhaust your enthusiasm for a character and it's nice to be able to leave a piece in the rough and move forward," he says.

You can see more of Dave's designs at www.humbleego.com.



MYFX forum winners

The ImagineFX forums are always buzzing with art crits, digital questions and inane banter, but some of the most popular threads are the MYFX challenges. MYFX challenges are run and judged by the forum members of IFX. And despite the fact that people are in competition with each other, it

really is one of the friendliest forums on the web. To join in the challenges and to meet the colourful characters that make up the IFX forum family, log on to www.imaginefx.com, click onto the forums and scroll down to Art Challenges. Here's a batch of the latest worthy winners...



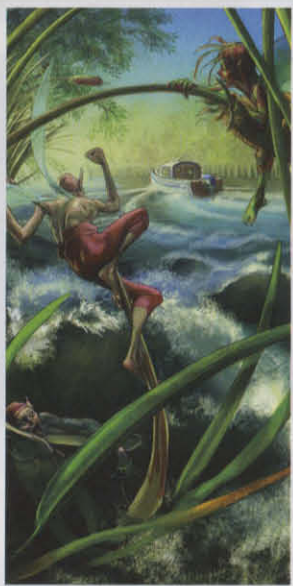
Banjaxedmdt beat off stiff competition on the monthly challenge about European History with his image Boudicca.



WrakeDesign won the plaudits from his peers with his disturbing image for the challenge about Fractured Fairy Tales.



Banjaxedmdt collected the crown (once again) for his stunning image all about the subject The Awakening.



The Wake was the subject for this challenge, which Nickillus won. Turn to page 84 for his workshop on children's fairy tales.



This epic image created by 19-year-old forum regular Echo deservedly won the challenge entitled Airborne.



This ethereal image took first place for the challenge based on the word Deity. Well done, Wiskey372.

3 of the best... DIGITAL ART SHOWCASE BOOKS

Exotique 2

Publisher: Ballistic Publishing
Price: \$45 ISBN: 1921002344

Printed on glossy paper and stuffed full of amazing images of fantasy characters, Exotique 2 has brought together the world's best artists - many of whom will be familiar to ImagineFX readers. If this book doesn't get your creative juices flowing, we doubt that anything will!



Spectrum 13

Publisher: Underwood Books Inc
Price: £24 ISBN: 1599290022

The number 13 may be unlucky for some, but it's a winner for the Spectrum series. Packed with the finest fantasy art of 2005, including big showings by Andrew Jones, Stephan Martinière and Justin Sweet, this is an essential artists' companion that should fill you with ideas.



Concept Design 2

Publisher: Titan Books
Price: £30 ISBN: 1845762851

Fans of monsters, science fiction and aliens will find plenty to inspire them in this collection of images by seven top entertainment artists and their 'guests'. There are nearly 500 pieces of artwork, all with accompanying text so you can learn about the ideas and processes behind the artists' stunning work.



Events

FANTASY & SCI-FI ART SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

BUBONICON

DATE: 24-26 August

URL: www.bubonicon.com

Despite the unpleasant sounding name, this is a con for all things sci-fi, particularly the written kind. As ever, there's an art show, with artist guest of honour William Stout. At the Wyndham Airport Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

EASTERN MEDIA CON

DATE: 24-26 August

URL: www.easternmediacon.southroad.com

A fan-run multimedia convention that covers just about everything, including TV shows, films and comics. Among the highlights is the art show. Newark Airport Hilton in Newark, New Jersey.

MEPHIT FUR MEET

DATE: 31 August - 2 September

URL: www.mephitfurmeet.org

A furry convention that's celebrating its tenth birthday, and this year has photojournalist Jim Lane as guest of honour (though we're not sure why). Discuss all things furry at the Holiday Inn Select Memphis Airport, Memphis, Tennessee.

COPPERCON

DATE: 7-9 September

URL: www.casfs.org/cucon

Although this is a sci-fi con, this year's theme is Children of the Night, so expect plenty of horror-themed events. Artist GOH is Sean Martin, and there'll be anime, an art show, masquerades and more. Embassy Suites North, Phoenix, Arizona.

FOOLSCAP

DATE: 21-23 September

URL: www.foolscapcon.org

This literary sci-fi convention also covers comics. Charles Vess is the artist guest of honour, while the art show features work from amateurs and pros. Bellevue Sheraton, Bellevue, Washington.


IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: EVENTS@IMAGINEFX.COM



DRAGON*CON

DATE: 31 August - 3 September

URL: www.dragoncon.org

 As if Worldcon wasn't big enough, here's the other huge must-attend convention. More than 20,000 visitors and an enormous art show make this a mecca for fantasy artists. A line-up of over 200 guests and bands is confirmed already. Held at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, the Hyatt Regency Atlanta and the Atlanta Hilton hotels in Atlanta, Georgia.

EUROCON

DATE: 21-23 September

URL: www.eurocon2007.dk

 It's that time of the year for big conventions, as Eurocon shows. Originally developed as an alternative to the major US conventions, this travelling show focuses on sci-fi, with a plethora of media thrown in. Artist guest of honour is David A Hardy. At the Valby Medborgerhus, Copenhagen, Denmark.

eurocon 2007

The 21st European Science Fiction Convention
Copenhagen September 21-23 2007

Guests of Honour:

Anne McCaffrey
Stephen Baxter
Zoran Jizkovic

Artist Guest of Honour:

David A. Hardy
Hon Guest of Honour:
Niels Dalgaard

www.eurocon2007.dk



map by Michael J Chomicki,
www.studioqube.com

The fantasy art world calendar...

Last year I went to...

DRAGON*CON 2006

ADAM PARISOT EXPERIENCED THE CONTROLLED CHAOS OF LAST YEAR'S DRAGON*CON...

Labor Day weekend in the US heralds the start of the massive multi-genre geek culture fest that is Dragon*Con, held annually in Atlanta, Georgia. Last year marked my third year attending the convention, which has grown noticeably in that short time.

Changes for 2006 included additional convention space, four new "program tracks" and expanded features such as the Walk of Fame. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Dragon*Con is its ability to capture a diverse set of interests under one umbrella – it's not unusual to bump into a Stormtrooper one moment and Jack Sparrow the next. With over 30 different program tracks to choose from, there's something for almost every type of fan.

Last year, I found myself attending panels related to art, anime, sci-fi and video gaming, to name a few. Celebrity panels have been consistently good in the past and last year was no different. Smaller panels tended to be more of a mixed bag, but there were some real gems in there. I made sure to browse the offerings at the Exhibitors Hall, Dealers Hall and Artists' Alley between panels. The Artists' Alley in particular continued to impress with its diverse assortment of styles and abundance of talent.

DC06 did have its share of misses. A few of the panels were affected by last-minute cancellations and organisational mishaps. Also, despite the expanded convention area, the main thoroughfares were as congested as ever, particularly near the ballrooms where the largest events were held. Still, these are relatively minor complaints taken from an overall positive experience. Dragon*Con remains a unique and exciting cultural event that I look forward to revisiting soon.



As well as being a regular convention attendee, Adam is a software engineer with a love of anime, manga and fantasy novels.

www.acpstudios.net

ICON

DATE: 28 September – 4 October


URL: www.icon.org.il

 The 11th annual Israeli sci-fi, fantasy and RPG festival has got the theme Legends this year. With 20,000 visitors to the last show, this is a fast-growing event, and although guests of honour are yet to be announced, they should be interesting. Tel-Aviv Cinematheque, Tel-Aviv.

WORLDCON

DATE: 30 August – 3 September


URL: www.nippon2007.us

 Undoubtedly the biggest show of the year for sci-fi lovers: five days of art, literature, gaming, anime, cosplay and loads more. This is the first Worldcon to take place in Japan, which should add spice to the proceedings. Yoshitaka Amano is the artist guest of honour. At the Pacifico Yokohama Convention Center in Yokohama.

SMASH!

DATE: 18 August

URL: www.smash.org.au

 That's the Sydney Manga and Anime Show to you. For one day only, enjoy a feast of cosplay, art comps, games, screenings and panels, as well as the Artists' Circle (like an artists' alley, but you never get to the end of it). At the Roundhouse, University of New South Wales.



Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Carney, on rob@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

Dying for the next issue

Hello. First off I have to say that your magazine is amazing. This is the first magazine that I have renewed a subscription to and plan to do until the day you quit publishing it, or I die (hopefully, I die first).

I didn't catch on to you guys until issue 5 and I know a lot of others who haven't caught on until more recently. In one issue you provided a digital form of the first issue you printed. I would love to see this happen more often, or at least a reprinting of your earlier issues. Here in the States they are



ImagineFX – worth dying for. And worth coming back from the dead for.

FROM THE FORUM AT
www.imaginefx.com

This month's forum topic: Do I need to enrol in painting classes?

Do you have a formal art background, or did you just learn to paint digitally? If you have taken painting classes have your skills translated well into the digital art realm, or did you have to learn a new skill set all over again?

coriesquires

I learned to paint traditionally with oils, and when it came to digital I just applied the same basic technique, which took a bit of getting used to. Good draughtsmanship, rules of composition, colour theory et al are non-medium specific, and they are what matters most.

em...

I've always got all the information I needed by studying books and by asking people. If you're motivated in your goals you'll be able to reach them with or without school.

LordAlgol

I've been tempted to take figure drawing and oil painting courses. I've learned quite a bit right here on the workshops (check out the ones on Colour Theory and Composition). I find it better as I can move at my own pace.

Ikaber



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 20?

See page 93 for details on how you can get your hands on a copy. – Subscribe and get four issues for free!



hard to come by and even getting a used issue can get extremely costly.

Thanks for listening to us out here and for putting out this beautiful, awe-inspiring work. Your artists, your writers and the rest of your staff should get in a big circle and pat each other on the back (or at least kick each other in the ass). Hopefully I'll be able to get my art in your pages one day.

David Ketcherside, via email

Rob replies: Thanks for the kind words, David. I'll initiate a serious ass-kicking right now. Seriously, PDF issues available for download, or even supplied as a collection on a DVD, are an option we're in deep thought about. Watch this space.

Manga over-rated?

Thank you for providing us with such a great magazine. I particularly loved issue 19, as an aspiring concept artist, I guess it was bound to catch my eye. As a movie fan, I'm a bit disappointed in your review section where everything manga is good and the rest boring, it's not very objective.

Will you ever do re-prints of some of your most popular issues? Issue 16 is already out of stock everywhere.

Melanie B, via email

Rob replies: Thanks for your letter, Melanie. As far as our reviews are concerned, maybe we just love manga too much. I'll pass your comments on to my reviewers. You can still get your hands on issue 16 – turn to page 92 to find out how.

Get FXPosure

I'm currently creating an image featuring a city in the middle of a desert. What do I have to do to see my image as Image of the Day on ImagineFX.com and in the FXPosé section of the magazine?

César Cordeiro, via email

Rob replies: You can be considered for Image of the Day on ImagineFX.com by uploading your portfolio to the site. See <http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose> or page 51 for more. You can be considered for FXPosé in the magazine by sending your art to the address on page 19. Good luck!



The winner of our Star Letter prize receives a GITS DVD bundle, including the new Ghost in the Shell: Solid State Society, out in the UK on 20 August.

www.imaginefx.com

Feeling inspired

What a cool magazine! I never even knew there was a magazine like this that existed until I heard about it on ConceptArt.org. I just received my first issue couple days back and was thoroughly impressed with the workshops and information jam-packed DVD. This definitely gave me a much needed art boost.

I joined the website recently and intend on subscribing to this magazine every year from now on. To top it all I noticed that one of my pieces got sneaked in on page 18, issue 20... kind of. It's only barely a quarter of an inch but even that made me bounce up and down. Check the red circle in the picture below.

I just wanted to say thanks for making such a great magazine for inspiring artists and readers alike. Keep up the great work!

Sean Thurlow, via email

Rob replies

Thanks Sean. And talk about eagle-eyed! Celebrate with a GITS bundle courtesy of Manga Entertainment.



Sean spotted his image in our galleries. Upload yours at imaginefx.com today.

Did you get them all? Here's the references and the issue of ImagineFX you'll find them in... 1. Chris Foss structure from Captain Nemo's Castle. See IFX issue 002, page 54. 2. Rodney Matthews skull moon from the album cover for Flying Saucers Time Machine. See IFX issue 010, page 50. 3. Larry Fimrele mask from his first ever piece for Dragonance. Issue 006, page 54. 4. Hickey one this. The blade shape used in a classic Brothers Hildbrandt piece for Magic the Gathering. Issue 008, page 52. 5. Classic Frank Frazetta composition. Issue 001, page 54. 6. www.frazettartgallery.com

SPOILER ALERT! Don't read this till you've checked out the compo on page 62

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Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information I have ever seen. It is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist that wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones,
 Concept Artist, Massive Black Inc



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."

Jonny Duddle,
 freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Philip Straub



Philip is art director for video games company NCSoft. He's an expert on colour theory, and an ImagineFX regular. His work also features in Exposé 5.

www.philipstraub.com

Patrick Reilly



Patrick was inspired to become an artist by watching his father draw caricatures, and discovered fantasy art via Frank Frazetta.

preilly.deviantart.com

Melanie Delon



Melanie is a freelance illustrator based in Paris, France. Fantasy and dreamy subjects are her favourite topics to paint.

www.eskarina-circus.com

Andy Park



Andy is a talented concept artist who works for Sony. Among the games he has worked on is the popular God of War for PlayStation 2.

www.andyparkart.com

Nick Attrell



Nick is a Vue specialist who has particular interest in pseudo-historical settings and science fiction. He's from the South of England.

www.niandji.com

Bobby Chiu



Bobby Chiu is an independent artist from Toronto, Canada. He works in film and TV pre-production and teaches digital painting online.

www.imaginismstudios.com

Paul Gerrard



Paul Gerrard is an art director who currently works for Reflections Interactive. He's also creator of the Butterfly Soldiers online project.

www.butterflysoldiers.com

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US EASE YOUR ARTISTIC ANGST AT HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM

Question

Do you have any tips on how to maintain consistency in your work from the rough to the final image?

Nathan Biggs, England

My rough sketch clearly shows my overall idea and how I want to compose the final image. This is my map to the finish line.



Full-size Q&A images are on your DVD

My final image has built upon the rough notes set out in my sketch, not rewritten them. This shows that the process is effective and repeatable.

Answer Bobby replies



Having a set approach and maintaining consistency in your paintings is very important because, while it's nice to be struck by inspiration occasionally, you really need to have a backup plan. The creative industries are full of one hit wonders; to have longevity, you must have a system to work by.

I think of painting like running a marathon sometimes: it's a long

journey filled with sweat and pain but at the end of it, I'm always glad to have accepted the challenge. And like running a marathon, when I paint, the two most important things underpinning the process are a) where I'm starting and b) where I'm finishing.

To start, writers jot down point-form notes, actors do character research, and artists sketch. This is where I begin. My rough sketch is a quick study of what I plan to paint;

they're my notes for how I want my final image to look when I cross the finish line.

And of course, once I'm finished, I can judge how successful my methods were by seeing how much of my rough was retained in my final image. When my two minute sketch clearly provides the foundation for my six hour painting, that's when I know I have a reliable process that I can use again and again.

Step-by-step: Keeping a consistent approach from sketch to final



1 Starting with a linear sketch with very basic colours, I establish a basic lighting scheme with cold lighting up top and warm light at the bottom. This builds upon my initial idea that there is fire or magma flowing under the characters.



2 After basic lighting, I tighten up my image by establishing some details such as the reptilian wrinkles along the dragon's neck, the jagged stalactites in the background, and some lighting across the top of the bridge. This is the finished line drawing with a basic lighting scheme.



3 With the major elements established, I flesh out details to make structures pop from the page. I add lighting to the bridge supports and sharpen the shapes and colours of the knights. The last items are finishing touches: textures on the dragon's skin and sharp shield designs.

Question – What's a good method for digital inking?

Laurie Wilson, New Zealand



This quick character design shows that successful and traditional inking techniques can be achieved digitally by using the simple steps given below.

Answer Patrick replies



The first step is to eliminate problems commonly associated with the digital inking process. One problem is the slickness between the surface of a graphic tablet and the stylus tip. This slick reaction makes it difficult to control strokes and obtain smooth lines. To eliminate this problem you can either experiment with different custom nibs for your pen, or tape a piece of paper on the surface of your tablet, or (if you own a Wacom tablet) purchase a Wacom 6D pen, which has a thick felt tip.

The second step is to find the right program. I personally prefer to use Painter for inking.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, Painter has the quick Rotate Page Tool, which enables me to rotate the page quickly to accommodate my arm's natural stroke. Hold down Option + Spacebar (Mac) or Alt + Spacebar (PC). And secondly, Painter's brushes simulate

traditional brush strokes more accurately than other programs. My particular brush of choice is the Scratchboard Tool, found under Pen.

Once you're all set up you can open up a pencil sketch in Painter (at least 300dpi), create a new layer on top, select your brush and begin inking.

Artist's secret

PAINTER'S ROTATE PAGE TOOL

By using Painter's Rotate Page Tool you'll find that you'll not only be able to ink, but also create your pencil sketches in Painter as well.





The only additional light in this scene is point light to give the figure some detail – all the other lighting is calculated from the exported image of the sky.

Question

How do I make HDRI images for using in Vue Infinite?

Esme Gordon, England

Answer

Nick replies

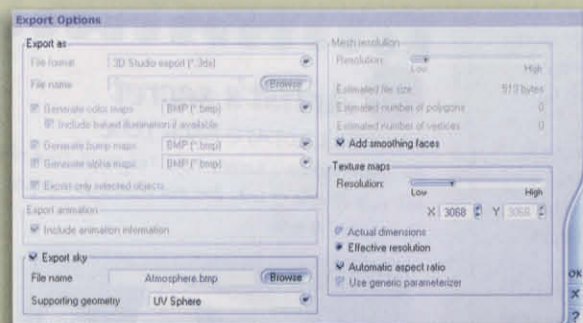


Vue Infinite can use an exported image of a Vue atmosphere as an environment map instead of a true HDRI image. To start with, load up or create an atmosphere to produce the sky that you want.

On the File menu, select Export Sky. In the Export Options window, make sure the Export Sky box is ticked. Give the image a name, and select the file format to export – bmp or png.

Under Supporting Geometry, select UV Sphere. Finally in the Texture Maps section, you're asked to select a resolution. I think that Vue's sky dome has a fixed dimension around the 2,000 pixel mark. I've tried much larger images of around 4,000 pixels that just result in a large sun filling the whole sky, and smaller images tend to come out a lot less detailed. So you want to set the resolution to about 2,000 pixels wide, select Actual Dimensions, and leave Automatic Aspect Ratio selected as well.

To use the image, just change your current Atmosphere mode to Environment Mapping in the Atmosphere Editor, load in your exported image in the Environment Map and click Yes when Vue asks if you automatically want to set the scene for image based lighting. You can change how much the IBL affects your scene by adjusting the Light Balance slider.



Export a sky as a UV Sphere to use as an HDRI atmosphere in Vue.

Question

Each time I try to paint a character with a background, it doesn't integrate well. Do you have any tricks that might help me?

Xavier Orton, Australia

Answer

Melanie replies



Integration is the key to give credibility to an illustration.

I usually work on that part at the very beginning of a painting. I try to not choose a colour for the main character that doesn't fit with the background, and I also check the light source – it has to be the same everywhere.

To work the general outlines of the character, I usually pick the background colour near the character's outline and with a hard round edge I paint lightly on the outlines (with a very low opacity) because in everything there are some colour reflections, not too much of course, but enough so the character is well integrated.



Left: I pick the background colour that is near the character, I'll do this all around the outline so I pick different tones from the background.

Above: The integration is okay, I only have to slightly blur some parts. Some elements such as the katana are not blurred, because I want it to stand out.

Question

My paintings always tend to look soft and blurry. Any advice or tricks to help fix this?

Pilar Martinez, Spain

Answer

Andy replies



It's tough to exactly address this without seeing your artwork or knowing your painting methods, but I can show you

one neat technique that could help you out, something which I myself find helpful. The Unsharp Mask filter creates a nice effect

that can be very useful. It sharpens edges and details to the painting. You are able to play around with the settings of this filter to your heart's content, until you achieve the effect that you've been looking for. It's always best to try this on a new layer – that way you won't affect your original painting.

Question

Is it okay to use photo reference or some photo elements during the development of a concept for a video game?

Bob Jones, England

Answer

Philip replies



This can be a somewhat touchy subject. When putting together quick concept sketches, some integration of photo reference can be useful in speeding up the process, but you need to be careful it doesn't become a crutch.

I feel it's important that all the artists I work with have the ability to create a skin texture, a satin looking fabric, a brick texture, or any material for that matter, from scratch, but there are situations where painting every texture detail isn't necessarily the best use of an artist's time. This is especially true when there is a wealth of royalty free texture libraries available that can help speed up the concept development process, enabling an artist to focus more on the 'idea' – do make sure that the reference images are royalty free, of course.

Preferably you should be able to create an idea without the use of photo reference and/or integration, but the ability to effectively use some photo reference to quickly generate an idea is also valuable in production.

The main focus of this concept piece was mood, colour palette and lighting, so I quickly applied a few different photo references as a base to work from.



Artist Secret

USING LIGHTING REFERENCE

When creating a concept painting from scratch, try referencing a photograph that applies a similar lighting and colour palette to the piece you're creating. This will help your painting appear more consistent.

Step-by-step: Using the Unsharp Mask filter



- 1 To apply Unsharp Mask to the entire painting without having to flatten all the layers, create a new layer. Next, press **Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E** simultaneously. This creates a copy of the entire image on your new layer.
- 2 Go to **Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask**. In the pop-up window, try these settings: Amount: 70%, Radius: 3.6, Threshold: 10. See how it sharpened your brush strokes and all the details. Play with these settings as much as you like.
- 3 You can erase the effect out of areas that you don't want sharpened. The idea is that this gives you another cool effect you can apply to your work. It won't make your painting into a masterpiece by any means, but it can help.

Question

Do you have any tips on how to paint images so that they look like they're underwater?

Ruth Hampton, Scotland

Answer

Melanie replies



Everything about your subject changes when you're painting them underwater, the light is different, the clothes react in a different way, the character is floating... To successfully paint a scene underwater, you have to keep all of this in mind. So colours are really important; the sky colour really affects the water's colour, as does the kind of water it is – is it the Caribbean, very deep in the sea or in a lake? Every little detail is important because colour will not be the same, so before I start the painting, I usually do a lot of research regarding the water I want, to avoid any mistakes and to understand how it should look and how it's going to affect my character.

After that I start by choosing my colours. For the character, if the scene is green, they will be slightly more green/reddish than the rest of the picture. Each element – clothes, jewels, hair – will be mainly green,



As you can see, this character seems to be floating, her hair is in movement, the general lighting is diffuse and the colours are mainly green.

with some little colour variations, of course. Also, there are always some rays of light and/or bubbles of air that will be floating around the character, and adding them is important to give more credibility to the image. I'll show you all those little tips in deeper detail to help you achieve a watery look, so let's go!

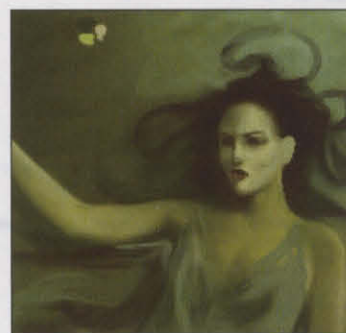
Artist Secret

USE A CUSTOM RAY BRUSH TO CREATE GREAT UNDERWATER EFFECTS

For this special underwater effect, I used a custom brush, because I need to have a lot of colour variations and texture to my brushstrokes. The base to create this brush is a basic round, but I've erased some parts of the shape. I use it with spacing to 25 per cent and opacity set to Pen Pressure. This brush can also be used for painting hair, clouds and skin.



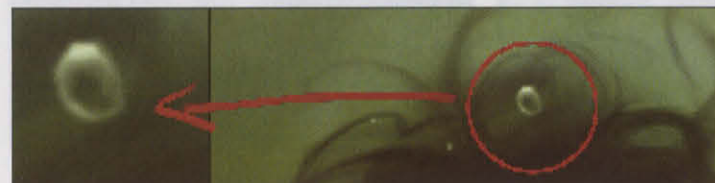
Step-by-step: Creating an underwater effect



- 1 As I said previously, the colours are really important with this kind of image. Water is usually green or blue, it depends on what kind of water you want your painting to be set in. Here I choose a kind of green lake, with a turquoise/yellow light. I make the shadows with a dark green and the light very soft, as underwater light is filtered.



- 2 The character is floating, like in space, so clothes, hair, and everything else must be in a kind of movement – this will increase the impression that the character is not on land but underwater. So I don't have to paint something very precise/detailed, for example I do the hair with a hard round edge with a very light opacity, and blur the extremities.



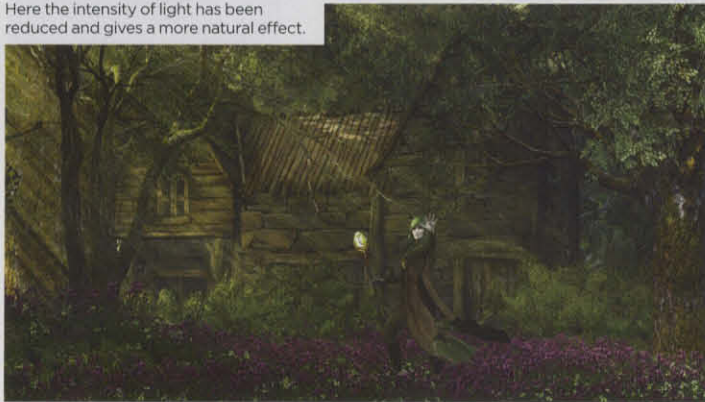
- 3 Now I have to add the little touches that will make the picture seems more realistic, such as bubbles of air and rays of light coming from the surface. The bubbles are moving to the surface so I paint some little oval random shapes and add some light on the top, and I blur some to increase the feeling of movement.

- 4 For the rays of light, I pick the area I want them to highlight and, on another layer, paint some random lines on the character that will follow the curve of the body. I also daub the light here and there to give a more realistic look to the rays. Then, once I'm satisfied with the result, I blur some parts, again because the rays are moving.

This scene shows a volumetric spotlight lighting the scene. The intensity has been set too high, and while dramatic, it's a bit too excessive.



Here the intensity of light has been reduced and gives a more natural effect.



Question
How do you get sunrays to shine through trees in an image created in Vue? *Sam Totti, Italy*

Answer
Nick replies



The best way to achieve the effect of the sun shining through trees so that you can see the sun's rays is to use a volumetric spotlight, placed so that it crosses the camera view.

Volumetric lights can be the most realistic light sources in Vue. You can change their settings to cast shadows in volume, or show smoke or dust in the light beam. Setting up a volumetric light in a scene to achieve the effect you want is pretty straightforward.

Place the light behind the trees in your scene, so that the light beam crosses the camera view as this makes it easier to see. You can either use the spotlight to supplement the existing sunlight, in which case position it to match the direction of the sun, or dispense with the sun light all together and just use the spot light as the

light source, and use small point lights as fills in particularly dark areas of your scene. Edit the light to Cast Shadows In Volume and adjust the intensity to suit your scene.

What you can also do is to use a light gel on the spotlight to disperse the beam a bit more. The default Caustics Gel works quite well, but for better results you can make your own in your chosen paint program and import it into Vue. This solution will work equally as well in all versions of Vue.

The example images I've produced show two very similar scenes and the effects that changing the intensity of the spotlight has on the scene.

Question
What dimensions do you recommend for creating images?

Angela Martin, US

Answer
Patrick replies



The best size for working digitally is 300dpi, but sometimes this may present a problem due to the high dpi canvas size and the use of large brushes to block in large areas.

Open a canvas at about 100dpi (this should make your computer a

bit speedier). Now you can begin your digital painting by blocking in the areas that require you to use the largest brushes.

Once you're done with your basic large brush sketch, bump up the resolution on your canvas and start working on smaller details that require smaller brushes.



As you can see I've begun with a low-resolution canvas and started working with large brush strokes to block in my subjects.



After blocking in with large brushes I bump up the resolution and begin working on tighter details with smaller brushes.

Question
How do you create a mood for an image and know when to stop?

Claire Trotter, England

Answer
Paul replies



For me what it comes down to is how I perceive the purpose of the picture. There is a tricky balance between getting the image to look pretty and enhancing the emotion of the image. I never truly realise my emotional content until the final stages so its then when I need to step back and think 'what is the purpose of this image?' and 'how can I add to that?' So think about what your character is doing,

how he feels, then focus on the mood that will bring that out.

Like in a movie, each scene will be colour treated to enhance the scene's emotional direction.



I start with a black and white image then slowly add subtle tones - a wash of green makes my main mood.



The main focus is the mouth, so I draw out the colour, and make the viewer's eye go directly to this area by enhancing the tones there the most.

Question

How can I use photo manipulation to create my own ideas without being confined to the original photo?

Viola Forbes, Wales



Here I'm cloning the detail from the image of the bark, then skewing it slightly to fit the angle of my blocked out shape.

I trim off any overlapping excess bark as to keep my original shape, then carefully blend in all the colours of the cloned images so it all gels together.

Answer

Paul replies



The key here is the sketch, using the photo manipulation as a means to add layered detail from your photo to your image.

That's not to say you need to create a detailed sketch, it need only be a rough outline, a blocked out area of shapes.

I prefer manipulating the photo's imagery for my own needs rather than try to change a pre-existing image into something else. For this image (see main image, above) I used Photoshop, and blocked out my main shape on one layer, just a simple black fill with some light airbrushing to give it shape. Then I placed my photo on a top layer and lifted detail

from it into my blocked out area using the Clone tool, manipulating it to fit my shape.

You can either mask the desired area for precision or simply use the shape as a mask later on to delete any overlapping imagery. I am laying down detail, being careful to keep all the perspective correct and the angles of the grain. At times it's very useful to do it all in monochrome, gradually darkening and lighting your imagery to all blend together, then later add the colour.

So take what you like from a photo, its detail, or parts of its shape and use it. I like the texture and the engraved shaped from this particular piece of timber, as it fits in well with the creature design.

Question

My characters tend to look dull and the forms don't look solid. Do you have any advice on how to give them the punch they need?

Lee Davies, England

Answer

Andy replies



First, make sure your painting or sketch has a good range of value

contrast. When the values have a good contrast, it really gives the piece a pop that helps it to jump out of the page (or computer monitor).

A strong value drawing usually has a good range going from a black to white (be sparing with 100 per cent white, as highlights don't always go to a complete white). A good practice is to actually paint value swatches in the corner of your painting, then you can just colour pick from these rather than having to pick the value from the colour selector. This also helps you to stick to a limited number of values. Usually four swatches are good – white, 30 per cent grey, 60 per cent grey, and black.

Another good practice is to check your values by using an



Paint in your value swatches on a separate layer and just colour pick from them. This will help you maintain a good value range.

Adjustment layer. Select the top layer so when you create the Adjustment layer it will affect all the layers below. In the layers window click on the icon at the bottom of a circle divided into two, half black, half white. In the pop-up window, click on Levels. You can adjust the levels of the painting without permanently affecting any of the layers below. This is a great way to see if the contrast of the painting needs adjusting in areas where it lacks punch.

Adjustment layers are great because they affect all layers under it without permanently affecting any of them. Experiment with them.





Question

I want to create a painting that combines organic and man-made concepts seamlessly. Can you give me any tips on the best way to do this?

Johnny Tyler, England

Answer Philip replies



I love juxtaposing two ideas into one painting and I truly believe this approach can generate some of the most interesting and unique imagery. I thought it might be fun for me to take this challenge on myself, documenting my process.

First, as always, I do a ton of research and reference gathering. In this case, I'm still searching for a solid idea, so I just start sketching some very basic concepts to get the creative juices flowing. Since I've been on this destruction, end of the world theme lately, I decide it's imperative that I

somehow integrate a huge sense of scale into the developing scene to accentuate the overall impact of the destruction concept.

Next, it occurs to me that creating an actual entity that is partially made up of organic and man-made elements that is descending upon the most iconic of man made structures – a city – could make for some very cool imagery. So, at this point more reference gathering and experimentation ensues.

Other ideas start popping up, and this is where the magic happens for me. I start thinking of the entity almost as a disease that is either sucking the life out of the helpless city below or is feeding off the pollution and decay industrialisation creates. Now with the idea further solidified, it's more about me executing upon the concept and refining details.

Step-by-step: Combine organic and man-made elements in a painting



1 Using Photoshop and a set of organic and man-made custom brushes I quickly get the basic idea on canvas. Just let the ideas come together fluidly, let the happy accidents occur. At this point I've established the basic structure of the city and the strange entity looming above but, the composition, lighting and colour palette still leaves a lot to be desired.



2 Next, I refine the composition. I decide to expand the canvas for a more cinematic aspect ratio and swap the iconic composition approach I was applying earlier with an asymmetrical rule of thirds hybrid approach. The city then gets a facelift with the application of some custom 'city lights' brushes applied on a separate layer set to Colour Dodge.



3 I begin refining the details and further applying a balance of organic and man-made objects to the scene. I decide the organic aspect needs to be pushed a bit more and suggest an insect-like head and face at the centre of the strange destructive entity. Some more smoke, fire, and atmospheric perspective are added for good measure and... all done.

Got a digital art problem? Painting pain? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.**



The art of CHRISTIAN ALZMANN

"I enjoy making images that tell stories and ask more questions than they answer." **Christian Alzmann** and the art of creative speculation



Christian Alzmann has worked on an enviable list of movies: *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Star Wars: Episode II*, *Men in Black II*... And that's

just the film work; we haven't even mentioned the books and personal projects.

What makes Christian shine are his priorities. "To me," he says, "ideas are the most important thing." That's why Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) hired him right out of college and why he's art directing there now. Aspiring artists everywhere should pay attention.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Growing up beneath the cloudless skies of California, Christian developed a suitably sunny outlook on life: "I had the feeling that it was possible to do anything, within reason, if you worked hard at it." It didn't hurt the development of this theory that Christian's dad was a director on wholesome TV show *The Waltons*.

When you add to his positive disposition an early exposure to art in the form of movies such as *Sinbad*, *Excalibur*, *Tron*

and, of course, *Star Wars*, you start to wonder if the world isn't just a simple mechanism after all. But life is never that straightforward. "I really wanted to be an animator at first," recalls Christian. "But after realising how much it cost for school I sort of gave up on art for a while." It wasn't until his twenty-third year that the creative pressure behind this financial dam had built up to sufficient levels where Christian made up his mind to "make a go of it".

Following in the footsteps of illustrious artists such as Ralph McQuarrie, Syd Mead and Drew Struzan, Christian enrolled at the Art Center in Pasadena. Studying illustration, Christian began to hone his craft. "Drawing the human or organic form was always very challenging," he admits. "Luckily it's also the most fun for me to draw." As a result, character design began to emerge as a strength.

LUCKY BREAK

Building a career takes considerable effort, but openings often present themselves in the form of a lucky break. In Christian's case, this was an interview with ILM. "I thought I had no chance whatsoever because I had a portfolio filled with



MAINTENANCE

That hits the spot... Christian has a genius for creating scenarios that really involve and engage the audience.



RAGE UPON HIM

*For Christian, the ideas remain top priority,
"even if they are simple and few."*

➤ animation artwork, backgrounds, storyboards and so on; nothing really suitable for live action movies."

Believing he had no chance of getting a job, Christian had none of the interview nerves and everything went smoothly. "It just so happened that they were trying their hand at digital features, so the portfolio worked well," he says.

ILM signed Christian up there and then, and he was "on cloud nine."

ALL IN THE MIND

"Art school is great at building up your ego," notes Christian with a wry smile.

"That got me through my first week at ILM." What brought him down to earth was a creative paradigm shift. "I realised that all of the paintings and drawings I was looking at there were done from the artists' imaginations," he says. The quality achieved at ILM was not a happy accident, it was the product of hard work, and lots of it.

On reflection it's obvious that this would be the approach – after all, there are no monsters or aliens to copy from. But at the time it was a shock to Christian who'd been used to drawing models. It forced a change in his working practice. "To know something well enough to draw it from memory is to really know it," he says.

One of the reasons this skill is so critical has to do with where the world of digital effects has got to. "I think we're at the edge of being able to create anything digitally," believes Christian. "Digital characters used to be impossible to do realistically and now the industry is on the edge of making the realistic ones a constant." If he's right, and the technology is nearly there, the possibilities will begin to



GATHERING

The leaping cavewoman demonstrates Christian's strong grasp of perspective, a skill that's served him well.

snowball for artists who don't need a model to work from.

TELLING TALES

Today, Christian's technique is his working model. Take a book cover as an example.

"I like to read the book and write down all of the items in the book that might look cool as an image," he explains. "Then I might look to combine some of these items in a way that gives the viewer a sense of the story." And at that point a solid composition of lights and darks can be laid down with strong shapes and values.

"Painting has always been a bit easier," notes Christian. "Shapes, values and colour made more sense to me visually than lines." The temptation would once have been to shy away from drawing – "early on I even looked at drawings as unfinished paintings," Christian admits. Luckily, ➤

THE DARKNESS

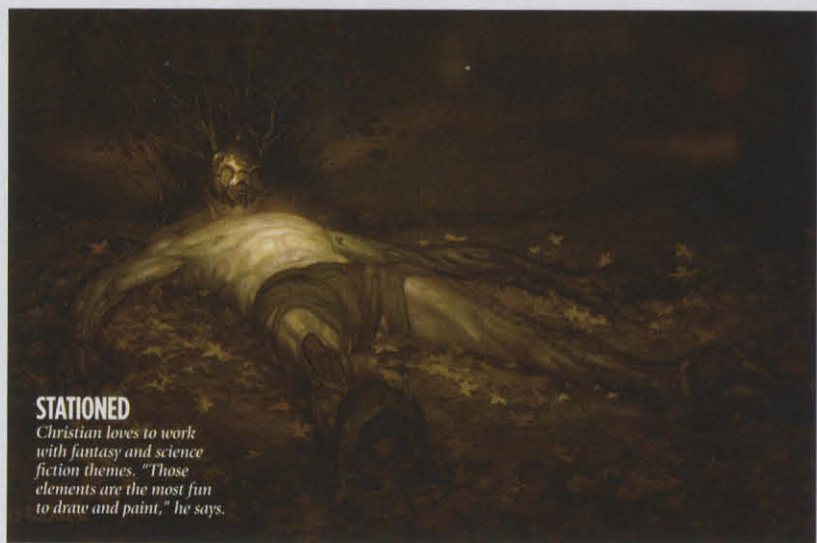
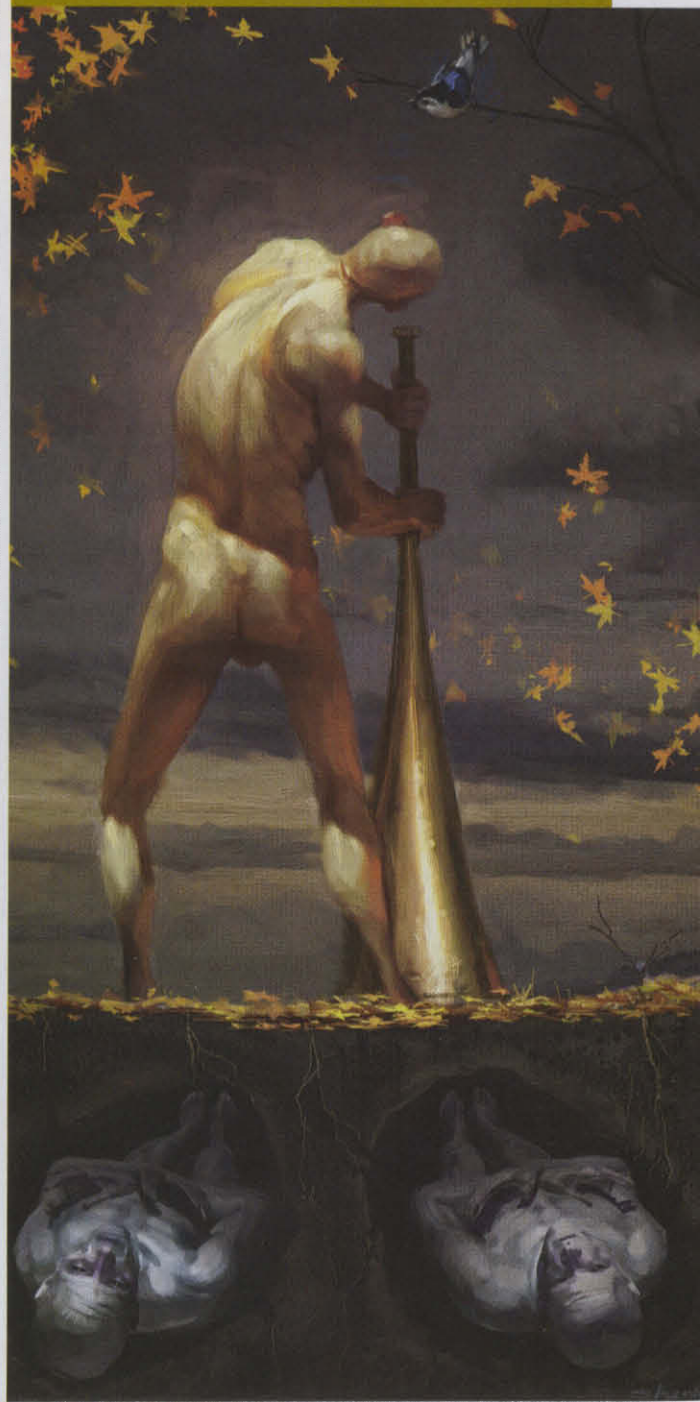
Tone and purpose in graphic compositions

Christian says he used to be surprised when people said his work was somewhat dark, but while putting the final touches to this piece entitled Listening he realised they might have a point.

"It's basically about a guy who's trying to hear or communicate with his dead brothers," says Christian of the character with the enormous ear trumpet. It's obvious from the picture that the brothers are busy decomposing – "but he's so focused on the death of his brothers that life, the bird and the sunshine – he fails to notice."

So why is he naked? "No arty reason other than that I wanted to paint anatomy not clothing," says Christian, who quotes Norman Rockwell: "Every single object shown in a picture should contribute directly to the central theme." Wise words indeed.

Oddly, considering its weighty themes, this particular composition was worked out on sticky notes. Christian recommends this approach as they're thumbnail sized and inexpensive. And they give you a way to rapidly try out different compositions. It's eminently practical.



STATIONED

Christian loves to work with fantasy and science fiction themes. "Those elements are the most fun to draw and paint," he says.

STAR WARS: EPISODE II

"Every film you're on has new things to design and new problems to solve."

Christian got the chance to fulfil a childhood dream when ILM offered him a place on the team for *Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones*.

Despite the obvious thrill, Christian kept his cool, observing that, "One must bury one's geekiness deep down and just approach the work professionally, at least while you are at work."

Obviously, however, there are moments where this can't be maintained, "like when George puts an approval stamp on your artwork for the first time," for instance.

The job wasn't without its challenges. "I came up with architectural, colour and lighting designs for the Zam speeder chase through Coruscant," says Christian, but this was tricky because he had almost no experience of designing architecture. "But you learn how to learn very quickly as a concept artist."

Fast learning is important but so is hard graft. "The great projects always make you work harder, because you never want to be the weak link of the department" says Christian. "So I did a lot of extra sketching to make sure I'd do the job well."

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

"I had the chance to be involved with the prequel to the film that made me want to start drawing in the first place," says Christian of his work on *Star Wars*.



➡ he's since seen the error of his ways. "Now I love to look at drawings as their own finished art," he says.

That being the case, when there's a new job on the slate, Christian does drawings first to get his hand moving. Digital comes second because he "hasn't found a way to get really rhythmic lines for my figures in a digital format yet." Cracking this problem has involved the purchase of a Cintiq, "so maybe that will change". Until then, however, it's the tried and tested route of pencils to Painter.

This sets Christian reflecting on the nature of digital production. "Creatively, I believe that in 3D and digital animation there are places that you couldn't go traditionally." And even on paper (or

“Creatively, I believe that in 3D and digital animation there are places that you couldn't go traditionally”

screen), 3D has an impact. "The simplicity of the more recent programs such as SketchUp and ZBrush will have an impact on the accuracy of the images," he says. "On the flipside of that, artwork that's so accurate and correct to anatomy and perspective will probably push many illustrators to go in the other direction and stylise their imagery even more."

BIGGER PICTURE

Christian's job as an art director may be demanding, but he loves his work – just getting to be creative would be enough for him. "As an art director I have to provide any artwork that might be needed for a production," he says. "But when there's a good team effort you're part of something bigger, hopefully contributing to something that'll be watched generations from now." Under those circumstances there's an element of obligation – not to make the kids of tomorrow suffer.

Creative people act as a prism through which the world passes and comes out re-envisioned. The artist's job is to suggest an alternative universe that's as complex as our own, though in new and different ways. In that spirit, notes Christian, "my ideas come from everywhere."

Painter & Photoshop A VINTAGE ILLUSTRATION CREATED WITH MODERN TOOLS

Create a traditional looking illustration using some old tools as well as a range of digital ones. **Christian Alzmann** takes you through his process for designing and painting this issue's cover illustration

Artist PROFILE

Christian Alzmann



AGE: 35
COUNTRY: US
CLIENT LIST: LucasFilm,
Harper Collins,
Penguin Group USA,
Nike, Dreamworks, Activision
www.christianalzmann.com

Christian Alzmann is an illustrator and art director who currently works in the film industry for Industrial Light & Magic. He has worked on many film projects, including *AI: Artificial Intelligence*, *Star Wars: Episode II, The Village*, *Men in Black II* and *War of the Worlds*. Christian's artwork has been printed in *Star Wars Mythmaking: Behind the Scenes of Attack of the Clones*, *Van Helsing: The Making of the Legend*, *Inside Men in Black II* and *Spectrum 9-13*.

Download files

You can get all the files you need to complete Christian's workshop by visiting our website at www.imaginefx.com and clicking on the downloads link. Painter X and Photoshop CS3 demos are available on your DVD.

This issue's cover is a Frazetta homage, and in this workshop I'll break down the process I used to create it. The steps include my thumbnail process, the study of my subjects in sketches and my use of Photoshop and Painter.

Anatomy and perspective are key to an illustration such as this, and there are many great books from which to learn these skills, but the best way to learn is to constantly draw. I

recommend drawing from books and doing life studies until you're comfortable drawing from imagination. There have been times when I've not had the internet handy and was thankful for the treasury of items I could draw from my head.

Another great learning tool is looking at photography to understand the balance of light and colour in an image. Learning to use these tools is a great advantage.



PRO SECRETS

Play with brushes

Now and then I like to take a day or so with Photoshop and Painter just to play with brushes. Photoshop has such an easy system for capturing and creating new brushes it's a shame not to master it. You can make a brush out of any 2D image, or paint an item to create the brush.



1 Thumbnails

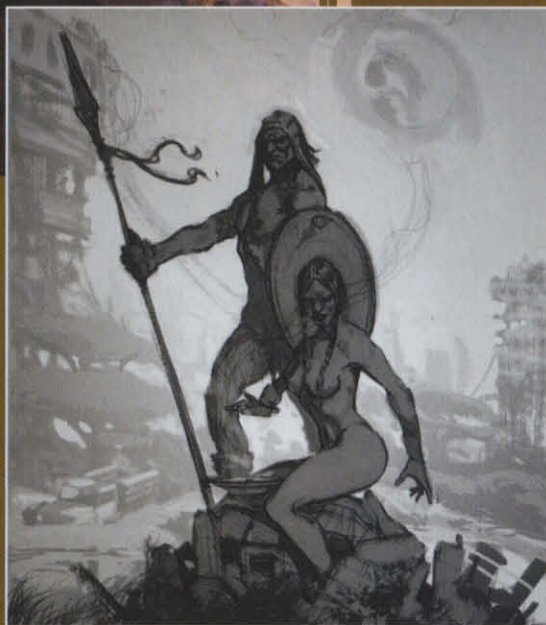
I do a lot of thumbnails. I often use sticky notes for these throwaway drawings – if they don't work, crumple them up and move on. I consider this the most important step. Here, I'm building my composition by roughing in the shapes and sizes of all of my major elements. If it's not singing to me at this stage I won't move on. I'll often spend up to two thirds of my project time building the thumbnail. One thing to note here is that if I'm working on something that will have text on it, such as a cover for a book or magazine, the text needs to be factored into the composition.

2 Studies

Depending on the amount of time given for a project I'll study my various elements by way of sketching. If you're drawing something that you don't yet know intimately, make tons of little drawings from reference. I'll do sketches whenever I have a free moment. This way I'll know my subject well enough to draw them without copying reference, and by that hopefully avoid making my drawing static.

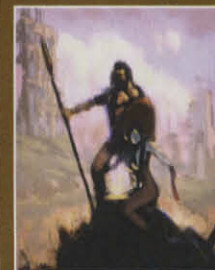
3 Drawing

I often draw figures out on paper before I go any further. Paper gives me a slightly better feel for the forms and their rhythms. I usually use a soft pencil and marker paper. Marker paper is slightly transparent so I can work the drawings up in overlays, changing, erasing and adding as I go. This keeps the process very liquid and somewhat similar to using digital layers. I then scan in the drawing of the figures and sketch in the background and rough values in Photoshop.



4 Colour study

The next thing to figure out is colour. I usually take my drawing and shrink it down as if I were painting a thumbnail. I



paint loose and quick as it's just about rough colour here; I like to leave some of the fun of discovery for the final painting. This sketch was

done in Painter using Square Chalk to paint lighter areas and Digital Watercolour to glaze in darks.



5 Paint

After toning the canvas with a Multiply layer, I start to build the painting up from back to front – the sky is the first layer, the mid-ground buildings are layer two and the heroes are on layer three.

I put 99 per cent of my brushwork down in Painter. On this piece I used Thick Wet Oils and Square Chalk on a Linen Canvas. To avoid making the painting feel stiff I build it up as a whole from dark to light. I paint in the shadows, then midtones, then the highlights. Once the brushwork's finished I bring the painting into Photoshop and do 'digital glazing' on it, where I use adjustment layers such as Levels, Colour Balance and the Photo Filter to tweak the tones. By painting in and out of these with black and white I can change areas without changing Painter brushwork. Once I have things where I want them, I add some final touches and I'm done. ●





THE ESCAPED

Creating whole worlds and backstories around a specific character enables Robin to really define his illustrations.

ROBOTANK

Robin's style mixes fantasy and sci-fi, drawing on films such as *Minority Report* for inspiration.

FORWARD

First Robin imports his sketches into Photoshop, before letting his imagination run wild.

KEVIN AD

While his character and scenery rendering skills are second to none, Robin doesn't think a character is complete until they have a backstory.

Robin Chyo

Meet the young artist who blends his dramatic imagination with illustrative skill

Like any successful concept artist, Robin Chyo's work goes far deeper than the contours and colours of his illustrations. Ever since the 24-year-old San Jose resident first started playing video games as a child, the idea of creating a character with a sense of history and an individual background story has been his passion.

That passion has served Robin well, ultimately landing him the role of concept artist at Cryptic Studios – developers of MMOs including *City of Heroes & Villains* and *Marvel Universe Online*. But unlike most concept artists, Robin never thought of his passion for illustration as a career path.

"Illustration was sort of something that just kind of happened," explains Robin. "I wasn't really introduced to it until

college, and even then it felt more like I was segueing into it, as I spent a lot of my youth doing character designs for fun. So I think illustration was something I was going to end up taking part in eventually. But I think I did my first *real* illustration when I was 18 years old, in high school."

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Robin spent his early childhood engrossed in video games and drawing. With a doodle-pad never far from reach, he graduated from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco with a BFA degree in illustration.

Robin draws his influences from the likes of Jon Foster, Akihiko Yoshida, Yoshitaka Amano, Hiroaka Samura, and Kevin Dalton, while he says his work is a manifestation of his dreams, nightmares and a whole host of crazy ideas that pop into his head.

"I just love creating things that are disgusting and horrifically terrifying," he explains. "But it all usually starts off with a bunch of abstract silhouettes and from there, I just let my subconscious take over. One thing that I always try to incorporate into all of my art is creating something unique. I'm not the type of artist that goes out and creates fan art or anything like that. I like to go against the flow of traffic."

SPAGHETTI WESTERN

Before taking up his current role at Cryptic, Robin dipped his hand in some other projects, most notably a stint with Microsoft, and a collaborative graphic novel called *Wanted*, in which each artist involved contributed a spaghetti western style graphic story in black and white.

"Matchstick Monsters Studios was a small project that some friends and I collaborated on," says Robin. "One of my classmates from the Academy, Nima Sorat, was thinking about creating a graphic

Artist PROFILE

Robin Chyo

AGE: 24
COUNTRY: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Akihiko Yoshida, Yoji Shinkawa, Jon Foster
EMAIL: robin@robin-chyo.com
www.robin-chyo.com

CAVE

The great blending work in Photoshop comes from hours of dedication – to stunning effect.

WOLFGIRL A/B

Every character takes shape on a sketchpad before Robin adds colour and life to them in Photoshop.



UNDERGROUND

Robin is remarkably frank on how he honed his rendering skills – practice, practice and more practice.

REMMENT WARRIOR

Movies, computer games, dreams and nightmares influence Robin's style.



novel and I expressed an interest in the project, and gathered together some friends of mine, Ed Tadem and Jason Chan. We wanted to create a self-published book that might help find us some work or exposure."

It was during the Wanted process that Robin really honed his style, which mixes dark, brooding creatures with classic futuristic cityscapes. Drawing his inspiration from computer games, films such as *Old Boy* and *Minority Report*, and sometimes even the pages of fashion magazines, Robin sets about creating each concept and character as an individual with their own identity.

"Just the idea of creating an identity and applying a backstory to them gets my creative juices pumping," enthuses Robin. "My goal with character design is creating a person that looks like someone you'd see on the street but also someone you could find in a sci-fi or fantasy game, or movie."

"After a new concept is born, I usually start off by sketching large swoops and swooshes in Photoshop. I really like organic compositions, as they can really help guide

the eye on where you should be looking. After that it's just a matter of using your imagination and thinking about what belongs where."

Robin is self-taught in Photoshop, his mainstay application, but confesses that he found watching friends work with layer and blend modes far more helpful than anything in any book or class, picking things up as he went along.

"My techniques are pretty much the standard affair, but I try to take it a step further by adding my own flair to it," he explains earnestly. "I think it's just me trying to express myself through the image. As for my rendering skills, sadly it's just from many years of practising and observing light and how everything reacts to it. There's no magic to it. Just practice, practice, practice."

FUTURE FANTASY

Although Robin has achieved so much already, he's frank enough to admit there's so much more he can achieve and many ways in which he can improve. If you ask him about the future, his reply is that while

"I love creating things that are horrifically terrifying. I just let my subconscious take over"

he's inclined to working as a freelance illustrator at some point in his career, for now at least, he's happy being paid to do something he loves on a daily basis.

What's more, he's grounded enough to see that it's his work, and not his relatively young age, that's led him to where he currently is. All these rising star tags might make headlines, but for Robin they're simply recognition for the years of dedication and passion he's invested into his creative work. For now, he's set on developing as an illustrator and becoming a lead concept artist with a reputation for professionalism and creativity.

"There's nothing better than gaining more freedom and being able to mentor others," Robin thoughtfully confides. "I'm sure it'll be a long and troublesome road to get there, but I think if it's something I want – and I do – I'll do my best to get there." ●



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Josh Kirby

Celebrating the work of one of the leading science fiction illustrators of the 20th Century

If ever there was an artist whose body of work put paid to the old adage about a jack-of-all-trades, it's surely Josh Kirby. Although primarily known as a painter of wildly imaginative, often humorous science fiction and fantasy scenes, and in later years much admired for the covers he produced for Terry Pratchett's multi-million selling Discworld series, Josh was an artist of the old school with a bewildering number of strings to his artistic bow. It just so happened that out of all the styles and subjects he could turn his hand to, the one that proved the most fulfilling was one with fantastic commercial appeal.

BECOMING JOSH

Born in Liverpool in 1928, Ronald William Kirby was trained at the Liverpool City School Of Art, an establishment renowned for the thorough and practical grounding it gave to students in readiness for

a financially successful art career. There, fellow students likened his work to the 18th Century artist Joshua Reynolds, and so the nickname 'Josh' was given.

Some success as a portraiture artist followed, but Josh ultimately found its formality restrictive. A stint painting London Underground film posters for an art studio in London was next, and then a brief sojourn working for a film company in Paris. Returning to London, Josh took further classes at St Martin's and the Central School Of Art, before setting up a

studio in Bushey, Hertfordshire. There he would spend half his week producing book covers, and the other half working on his own personal works.

By 1955 Josh had begun to produce artwork for book and magazine covers. Topics ranged from non-fiction to Westerns and crime novels, though it was commissions for

Artist PROFILE

Josh Kirby



Legendary artist Josh Kirby is best known for his fantasy work, but he dabbled in many genres of art. He claimed he

wanted to be an artist from the age of 7, but didn't discover fantasy until later. His most famous work is for Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels, which he worked on until his death at the age of 72 in 2001.

www.joshkirbyart.com

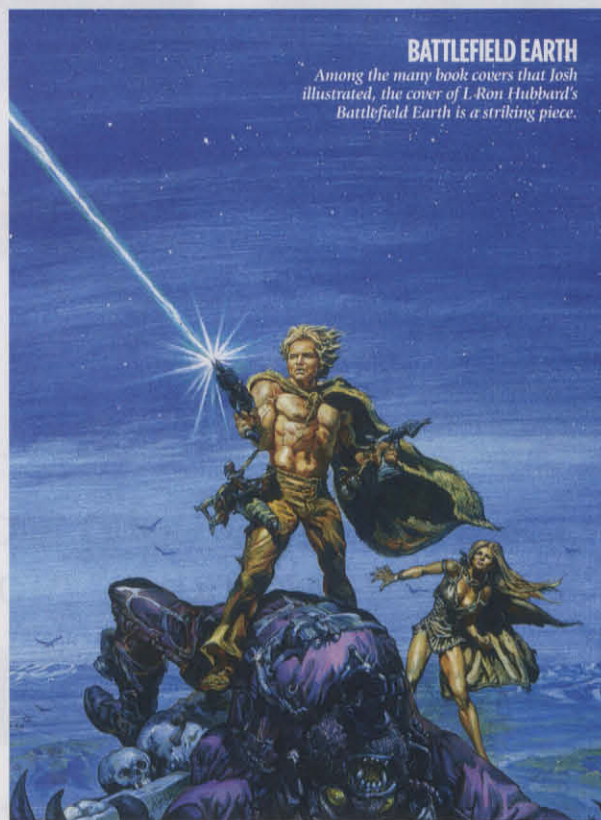
DRAGONSLAYER

Josh enjoyed painting this fire-breathing dragon for the Wizards, Warriors & You gamebook, written by R L Stine under the pseudonym Eric Affabee.



BATTLEFIELD EARTH

Among the many book covers that Josh illustrated, the cover of L-Ron Hubbard's Battlefield Earth is a striking piece.



THE COLOUR OF MAGIC

The Colour of Magic, painted for the 1984 novel, was Josh's first Discworld cover, and the start of a long and fruitful partnership.



RETURN OF THE JEDI

A truly iconic poster, painted from an Eddie Paul design for film promotion in the UK.



science fiction work – visualising stories by the likes of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Ray Bradbury and Fritz Leiber – that would prove pivotal to his career.

SC-FI PASSION

"His interest was just really sparked once he began to get commissions for science fiction work, says Amy Harnell, Executive Director of the Josh Kirby Estate. "Josh was somebody who always had a twinkle in his eye and a smile playing on his lips, and so he was just naturally drawn to subject matter with humour, imagination and interesting quirks."

From this point Josh consciously chose to carve a career as a science fiction illustrator, though he did continue to embrace a wide range of topics for the next three decades. Relocating to a rectory in the Norfolk village of Shelfanger in 1965, he worked on a wonderfully diverse projects. These included a series of fanciful portraits of film director Alfred Hitchcock, paintings for classics such as Melville's Moby

“You get the impression that if you picked up a painting and pulled it out, it would expand to reveal even more. Every picture is alive” Terry Pratchett

REAPER MAN

Death has been made redundant in this 1991 Discworld painting, which is full of subtle reminders of mortality.





Terry Pratchett fondly remembers how he had several of Josh's other book cover illustrations in his collection before they started working together.

PRATCHETT ON KIRBY

Best-selling author Terry Pratchett discusses Josh's part in the Discworld phenomenon.

Were you aware of Josh Kirby's work, prior to the Discworld books?

He'd been illustrating for such a very long time by that point, and so I was aware of his name occasionally cropping up. What did come as a surprise was to find several of his covers among the paperbacks I already owned. People often now think of his style as the one he used for Discworld, but that was really just one of many.

How did Josh get involved with the Discworld books?

The publishers brought us together. It's a little known fact that Transworld weren't initially sure whether or not to publish *The Colour Of Magic*. Fortunately they chose to give it a go, and decided they needed somebody who could do weird, funny illustrations. And so they thought of Josh.

How did the collaboration work?

It wasn't really a collaboration. I think we were each happy to separately do our own work. The covers were always Josh Kirby's vision of Discworld, rather than mine. My view has always been that the people are real, rather than cartoons. Granny



Weatherwax is a handsome old lady, for instance, but Josh couldn't get away from those hook noses.

What sort of a relationship did you have?

We would have an exchange of phone calls about every cover. The thing about Josh was that it was hard to stop him going his way when he really wanted to, but I was slightly better at steering him than the art directors. I'd give suggestions, send clippings and source material. One thing I quickly discovered was that if he could ever find a woman in the story with a big bosom then it would find its way onto the cover. Josh said it was his duty as a fantasy artist.

How long did a typical book cover take?

Months. My wife once commented on the wonderfully velvety look of his work. Josh explained that this was because he took so long over his work that the dust would literally fall down and get stuck in the paint.

Just what do you think it was that made his work so appealing?

Looking at a Josh Kirby picture is almost like looking at an entire movie. You get the impression that if you picked up a painting and pulled it out it would expand to reveal even more. Every picture is alive.

www.terrypratchettbooks.com

DISCWORD

It is the colourful characters of Terry Pratchett's Discworld Josh is most remembered for.



RINCEWIND AND THE LUGGAGE
Painted for a calendar in 1995, this work features a collection of Discworld characters from several different novels.

Dick, personal pieces inspired by Renaissance art, and even a range of paintings for jigsaw sets.

But it was that love of science fiction and fantasy that ultimately drove him. Amy says it was a mission of Josh's to have science fiction and fantasy recognised as something credible, not only in the art world but also the literary one: "He said many times that he thought it was a vitally important part of culture and society, a way of mapping out paths for possible futures."

DISCWORD

Many now know Josh best for his Discworld cover art, of course. He fully expected his painting for the launch of Terry Pratchett's *The Colour Of Magic* to be a one-off. Instead the book set Terry on a course to become one of the country's best-loved and best-selling authors (around 50 million sales to date), with Josh providing the artwork for every main book in the series until his death in 2001.

"I don't think the Discworld work gave him a second wind, as he was already in constant demand, but it was a very happy collaboration," says Amy. "He liked the humour of the books, and become very fond of the characters. And of course it helped both artist and author in different ways. It became very easy to spot a Terry

Below: As well as Discworld, Josh illustrated other famous book covers, including Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Dorothy Baker's *Young Man With A Horn*.



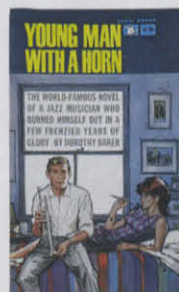
Pratchett book on the shelves – you can spot Kirby's art from miles away."

A number of things set Josh's work apart from that of other sci-fi and fantasy artists. For one, there was his ability to playful approach. Although never mocking, Josh could always appreciate the humour within the sci-fi and fantasy stories he was illustrating. Then there was his choice of tools. Art in this genre has long been

the thousands of covers and commercial illustrations, he still found time to do so much personal work."

But perhaps Josh's greatest strength was the way he could bring to the mainstream such a solid art grounding, both in terms of practical skills and also knowledge of art history. "What he was painting was outlandish and different, but his techniques gave his work that traditional form, linking it to the work of his predecessors," says Amy. "He definitely had

“Josh really is one of the masters of science fiction and fantasy painting, I think his work will continue to be a strong influence to other artists in the field” Amy Harnell, Josh Kirby Estate



associated with airbrushing, and more recently digital painting techniques. Josh, on the other hand, would meticulously create using oils or gouaches, often spending weeks or even months on a piece.

BORN TO PAINT

"He would literally get up with the sun, paint all day, and then go to bed," says Amy. "He simply didn't consider it a job. He used to say that what he really liked to do in his time off was to paint! So, in addition to

a respect for modern airbrush and digital artists, but it was artists like Bosch that he loved and was influenced by. He would work in a very classical way, creating paintings that were so involved, well structured, and technically brilliant. He used to say that he stood on the shoulders of the old masters."

Perhaps Josh put it best of all himself, when he said with typical simplicity and self-effacement: "I am a painter. That's what I do. I paint."

THE JOSH KIRBY EXHIBITION

Ann Bukantas, Curator of Fine Art at Liverpool's Walker Gallery, discusses the new Josh Kirby Exhibition being held at the gallery, and the artist's work.



What prompted the exhibition of Kirby's work at the Walker Gallery?

We were first approached by the trustees of his estate a couple of years ago, and, as he was both born and attended art school in Liverpool we thought it would be perfect to celebrate his work as part of the city's 800th anniversary.

Were you already familiar with his work?

I was one of the classic people that didn't have much knowledge of the sci-fi and fantasy arena. I was aware of his Discworld covers, but it was only as the exhibition project developed that I became aware of his volume of work, from the film publicity posters, to paintings of rockets and moonscapes and work for Jigsaw in the 1970s and 80s.

What's been the response from visitors?

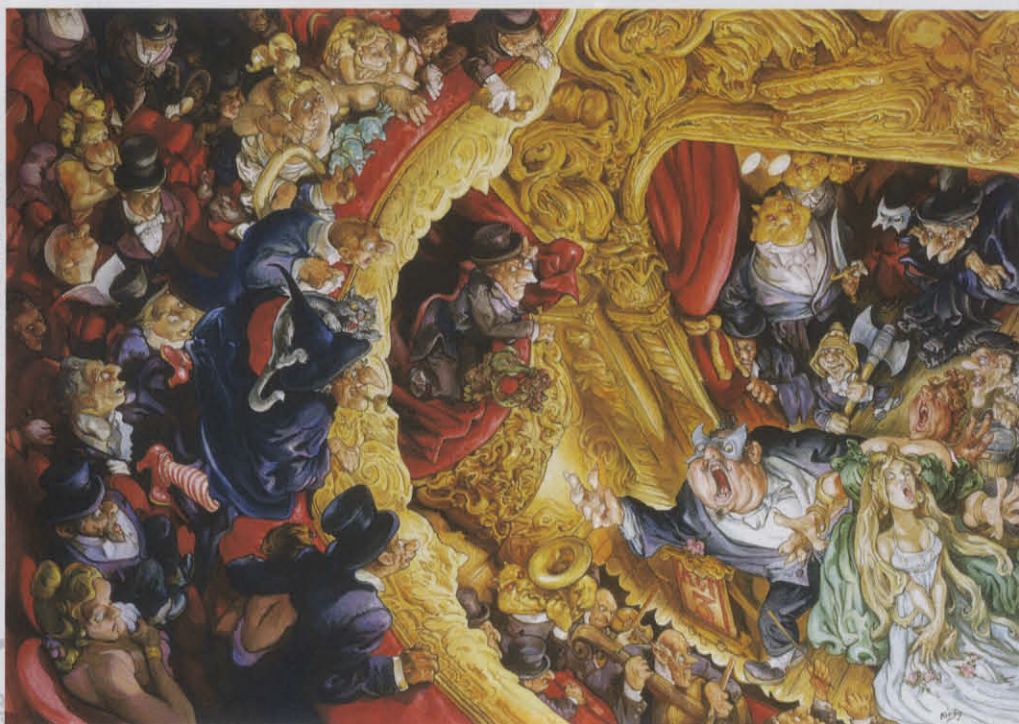
One of the interesting things is how many people who have said they had they never realised just how many books they owned with his art on the cover. And though they may have been aware of his Return Of The Jedi artwork, they probably didn't know about his other film poster work. And even people who thought they knew about his work have realised they were unaware of the full extent of it.

Would you say the exhibition shows an evolution of his painting style?

It was more that he could apply himself to anything. The City School Of Art was very much focused on getting students very good at the things necessary to make a career as a commercial artist, and so he came out proficient in all the things that underpin good work. And even after that he carried on studying life drawing and painting techniques.

Do you think his love of fantasy and science fiction perhaps lessened his reputation in the art world?

I certainly do. People can accept surrealism, but the moment it tips into fantasy and sci-fi they're uncertain. Josh was unwilling to accept over-categorisation. And he argued that he was part of a longstanding tradition, going back to artists such as Bosch. Artists have always painted bizarre creatures, it's only in the last century that it's become so segregated. But I do think that because Josh was a painter, rather than an artist using airbrush techniques, he was able to transcend any arguments. He was a contemporary artist who just happened to enjoy painting alien landscapes.



MASKERADE

The opera, complete with Phantom, a gallery of grotesques, and the requisite busty maidens, is given the Josh Kirby treatment in this cover painting for Terry Pratchett's Discworld book Maskerade.

"Josh was very good at compositing, finding new ways to view the action and pack an awful lot into a relatively small space," notes Ann Bukantas, Curator of Fine Art at Liverpool's Walker Gallery. "Maskerade is just such a clever painting. The view from the highest circle of the theatres shows the layers of audience below, with amazing attention to detail and such vivid colours. And it's also extremely funny, with details such as the audience member who appears to have spotted the artist at work. You get the impression he had a lot of fun with the painting."

Out of this World: the Art of Josh Kirby

The Walker Art Gallery

The first ever national gallery exhibition of the artist's work, will run until September 30. The Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool is hosting a season of events related to Josh Kirby and fantasy art.

For more details please visit www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker

Portrait of an Artist KATARINA SOKOLOVA

The Ukrainian artist reveals why beautiful women always feature in her paintings, and how she fell in love with Painter

Artist
PROFILE

Katarina Sokolova

AGE: 20
COUNTRY: Ukraine
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Dali, Picasso, Renoir, Monet.
SOFTWARE USED: Painter X, some Photoshop.
AVERAGE TIME TAKEN PER IMAGE: It varies a lot, from ten days to one month.
WEB: www.katarinasokolova.com



Ever since my childhood I have been living in two worlds – the real one and my own imaginary one,” says Katarina Sokolova.

“Sometimes their realms lie far from each other, and sometimes they almost collide and I do not know where my next idea will materialise. In those rare cases when my fantasy and the reality intersect, I immediately attempt to draw a sketch.”

If Katarina’s exquisite paintings are anything to go by, that fantasy world is a rich one indeed. Created mainly in Painter, her work has featured in three Exposé books and two Exotique annuals. But these digital images, often of sensual, beautiful women, are just a part of Katarina’s repertoire, together with photography and traditional black and white graphic work.

ART EDUCATION


She began drawing at the age of six and was enrolled in the workshops of the Painters’ Union in her native Ukraine. “I would completely leave behind the real world, forget its noisy streets, the time and my friends. I started batik – painting on silk – with its unimaginable magic of colours. It made me feel like a sorceress who could create an elusive, colourful, airy world of fantasy with a single stroke of a brush.”

Her next major obsession was black and white graphics, before she discovered computer art and threw itself into a world of colour. “They were not just a part of my life, they were my life,” she says. “In my mind, computer graphics are a way to remember a part of my illusion, to store it, transform it into an image and then to show my world to my audience.”



MARLA

Katarina took her inspiration for this image from a photo by the stylist Delphine Treanton and gave it her own unique look.



“I felt like a sorceress who could
create an elusive world of fantasy
with a single stroke of a brush”

Portrait of Katarina Sokolova by Russ Mills. www.byrogyphics.com

Portrait of an Artist KATARINA SOKOLOVA

➤➤ Along with her fashion and genre photography, each of these disciplines has a special meaning for Katarina, and she happily flits between them. "I draw my world with either black ink and coal, or with bright colours on the silk, depending on my mood and what I want to express on the canvas or cloth," she explains. "For me, drawing is a kind of a dialogue. It is a dialogue between an artist and the surrounding world. It is also a dialogue between an artist and an audience."

Her ideas come from everywhere but a recent visit to Japan is currently dominating her style. "The oriental culture and traditions have conquered my soul," she says. "Japanese girls are very beautiful." Her young niece is also providing plenty of ideas: "My sister makes up incredible stories for her and I draw illustrations for them."

DIVERSE INFLUENCES

In terms of historical influence, she adores Monet, Renoir and the Impressionists, but also Dali and Bosch. The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th are an especially enticing era for her artist's eye,

“A woman is an object of beauty. And beauty, as we know, will save the world”

and she can happily spend hours in galleries examining this work. "I wander along the museum halls to soak up the spirit of the epochs, the magic of colours and splendid atmospherics of the pictures."

After dabbling in Photoshop when she began digital art seven years ago, she discovered Painter and was smitten. "In my



WORLD WITHOUT END

A private commission, featuring the client herself as the character. "I was looking for a mystic mood," Katarina explains.

opinion, Painter is the ideal software for digital painting," she says. "It gives incredible choice for creating beautiful, full works. You can create airy paintings full of light, and show the tiniest tints of colours in numerous palettes."

Each of her digital pieces begins life as a pencil sketch. This is then scanned and imported into Painter. "I start to impose general colour at first. The shadows, light

BEYOND THE NATURE

Based on quick pencil sketches from a photoshoot with a model, Katarina decided to turn this one into a full painting.



and transitions between basic colours are applied to the woman's figure (because I always paint a woman in my work!) and I determine the general tone for the background. After that I begin to work with the details."

FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

Katarina makes no apologies for her fascination with impossibly beautiful and immaculate women. "Being a woman, I am intimately aware of the feminine nature, emotions and feelings and I can use them to enliven my work. A woman, just like nature, is an object of beauty. And beauty, as we know, will save the world." So will men ever get a look in? "Undoubtedly! I already have some ideas for this."

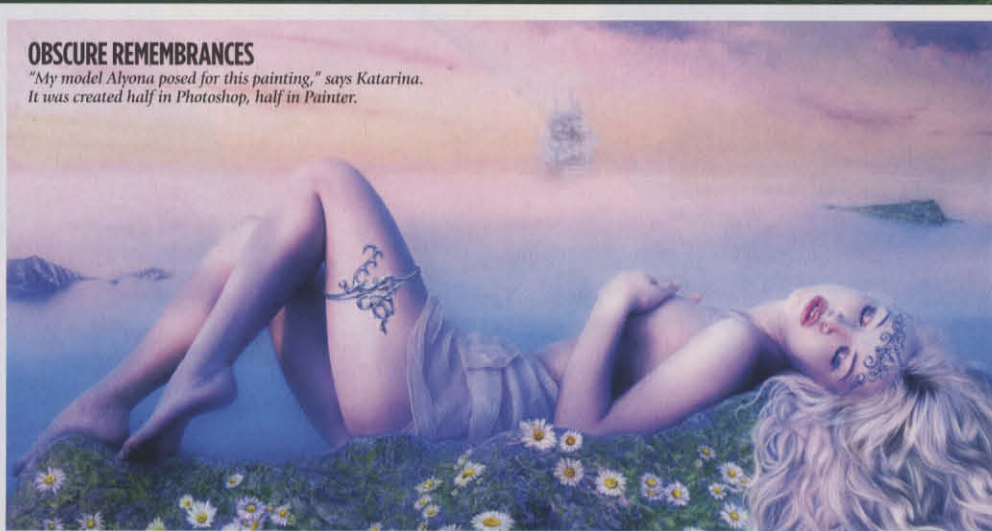
So far, most of her work has been sold to private customers – some via commissions and some "off the peg". There have been buyers in Britain, Spain, Japan, Switzerland and the US, but not many in her home country. "I know that the computer games and comics industries are developing well in Ukraine," she explains, "but it is not my line of business, I think."

Much to her regret, there's little time to create her own personal work, but she hopes all that will change soon. This year she'll earn her degree in economics, and with that under her belt, she plans to expand her range of projects, including a series of paintings that will form the basis of a future art book.

Until then, she'll continue to be awed by the beauty of the world. "It is extremely, unbelievably beautiful. It is perfect and complete," she sighs. "Sometimes I even feel scared by its beauty."

OBSCURE REMEMBRANCES

"My model Alyona posed for this painting," says Katarina. It was created half in Photoshop, half in Painter.





CHIO-CHIO-SAN

Years of Japanese tradition encapsulated in a portrait of a beautiful geisha

Katarina's passion for all things Oriental was always strong, but after her trip to Japan it became almost overwhelming, and led to the creation of her favourite work, Chio-Chio-San.

The painting was inspired by her meeting with a young geisha. "She amazed me with her outside and inside beauty, her grace, her tenderness and sensuality," Katarina explains. "This painting is her character – not quite her portrait, but how I see her in my soul."

"For me it totally sums up a Japanese geisha. She is a keeper of traditions, elegant and beautiful, from an ancient nation. I completed this portrait very quickly, over ten days, and I hope it won't be my last work on this theme."

Sophia

SPOT THE ARTIST

We've hidden five references to legendary fantasy artists in our cover image. Can you spot them all?

Use the form below to write in your answers, and then turn to page 32 to see if you got them right.

1. Artist:

2. Artist:

3. Artist:

4. Artist:

5. Artist:

Turn to page 32 to see if you got all five correct

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There's no better place on the web to discuss digital fantasy and sci-fi art than our community forums. Upload your images for comments and criticism, join in with weekly painting challenges, chat about the latest digital art software, or just participate in some friendly banter.

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<http://community.imaginefx.com>



EXPosé Pro

SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Francesco Francavilla

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.francescofrancavilla.com

EMAIL: info@francescofrancavilla.com

SOFTWARE: Painter

JOB: Comic artist



Francesco Francavilla is probably best known as the artist behind the comic series, *The Black Coat*.

He's also the artist for other comic titles including *Left on Mission* (Boom! Studios) and *Sorrow* (Image Comics). Whatever spare time he gets is filled with art too - he does concept art and storyboards for several film studios, as well as magazine and freelance illustrations.

Updates and news on current and upcoming projects (and much more) can be found at his website.

1 DALEK This piece of Doctor Who fan art is one that was created just for fun. "It's a good example of my black and white work, which I am very popular for," Francesco comments.

2 FROGS Francesco describes these terrifying-looking amphibians as simply a "random illustration." Wonder what was going through his mind when he came up with this concept?

3 BHUTA This is an example of Francesco's concept art work. Bhuta is a character design for the movie *The Eyes of Mara*.

4 CENTURION The inspiration for this illustration was the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *Terminator*.

1



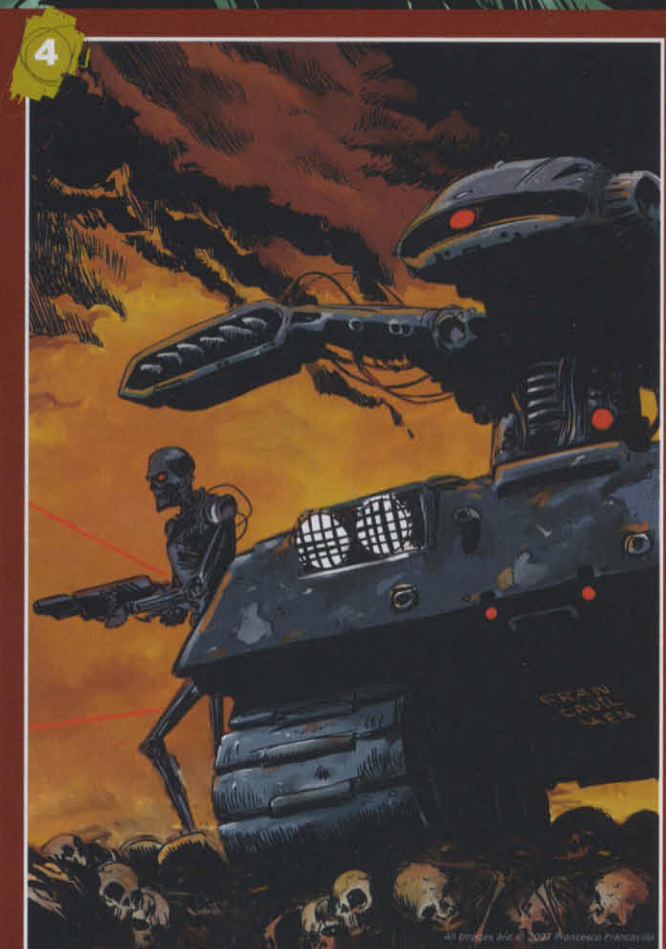
IMAGE © 2007 FRANCESCO FRANCAVILLA



2



3



4

🇨🇦 Martin Deschambault

LOCATION: Canada

WEB: www.dechambo.com

EMAIL: m.dechambo@videotron.ca

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

JOB: Senior Concept Artist, Artificial Mind & Movement



Martin was born in 1977 in Val d'Or, northern Québec. He's had a lifelong passion for drawing and movie special effects, and studied

Industrial Design at University of Montreal. "I got a distinction for my final project, called Vision of Urban Transport for 2080," he says. After a few years of working in the product design industry, Martin defected to the video game industry in 2005, working for Ubisoft on games including Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones. "I really like to imagine different environments, transports and creatures: realistic, futuristic or fantasy," he adds.

1 GENERAL CREATURE "This is a personal concept of a creature," says Martin. "The principal idea is based on its mouth. I had a lot of fun to imagining the way he opened it and the sound he would make."

2 GLADIATOR Done entirely in Photoshop: "This is a speed painting I did showing the idea of emotion of a gladiator waiting for his fight."

3 QUADRIPOD WINTER This is a personal concept which was inspired by a tiny crab I saw while on vacation by the sea." Martin smiles. "I did a lot of thumbnails for the quadripod on paper, and the rest in Photoshop."

1

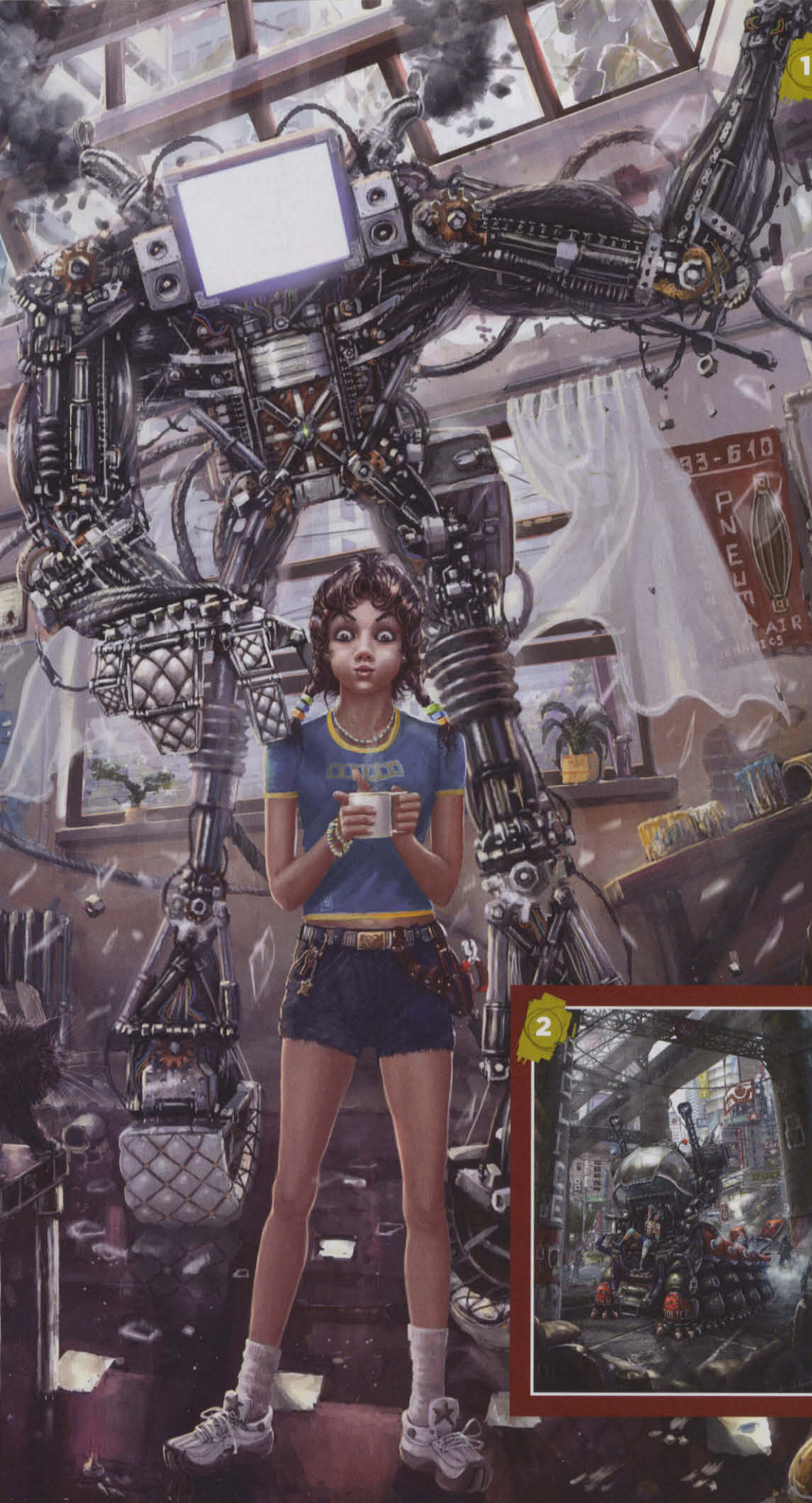


2



3





1

FXPosé^{Pro}

SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Nikolay Yeliseyev

LOCATION: Russia

WEB: www.yeliseyev.ru

EMAIL: nik@yeliseyev.ru

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter

JOB: Freelance illustrator



Nikolay has always been a fan of fantasy art, and used to do some drawing in pencil, but didn't think he could make much of a career out of it. However, when he started to work with computers, he stumbled upon the world of digital art, discovering some anime and manga images that were done digitally. So he began to learn for himself, adding: "I think digital painting gives us a freedom which is not present on paper, due to an opportunity to instantly correct mistakes." What's more, his passion for digital art has led Nikolay to study traditional art forms, too.

1 TOY This was a humorous composition, which was coloured in Photoshop. "My Idea was to draw inventor girl who has been surprised when her invention came to life," Nikolay explains.

2 CATERPILLAR POLICE For this image, Nikolay wanted to draw a special vehicle in a fantasy environment. "In the cabin of this vehicle there sits a pilot, drinking coffee," he reveals. "In the background is the city, which nothing threatens, being under protection of such formidable terrible machines. This vehicle, the Caterpillar, can stand on hind paws, run on tiptoes, and can carry out a lot of different functions, even giving coffee."

3 BIRDY Nikolay used Photoshop and Painter to create this piece. "I love vehicles, and particularly love to represent them in environments full of fantasy characters."

2



3





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HELL'S HORSEMAN

BY ALAN LATHAM

ImagineFX/PNY competition winner



"I wanted to create an eye-catching, colourful and energetic image. I started with loose pencil sketches and slowly a horseman erupting from a wall of fire emerged."

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Workshops

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Top fantasy artist Henning Ludvigsen shares his 20 golden pieces of advice for creating top-notch fantasy art





Artist PROFILE

Aly Fell

COUNTRY: England
CLIENTS: Eurocom, Core Design, Cosgrove Hall Films, Warner Bros



Aly's worked in the video games industry for five years.

Previously he was a freelance 2D animator and character artist, primarily working for Cosgrove Hall.
www.alyfell.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the folder called Aly Fell in the Workshops section.
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS3 (demo)

Photoshop DRAWN OF THE DEAD

Aly Fell creates a vintage horror pulp fiction cover in the style of EC Comics

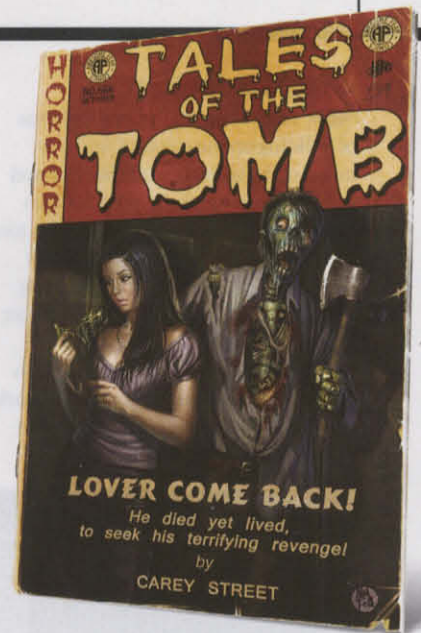
Science fiction comics, pulp fiction and horror have always appealed to me. Growing up in the 70s reading comics such as Nightmare and Psycho and watching Christopher Lee flashing his teeth as Dracula gave me a taste for the macabre. When I got the desire to recreate the mood and feel of these wonderful stories that dominated newsstands from the 30s though to the 60s and 70s, I found I could

do it easily with Photoshop. Here I'll take you through my process. I won't be concentrating on the technique as much as explaining the choices you make when choosing text, colour and mood, because these comics were all about mood.

A good idea before starting something like this is to look around the internet for comics and covers that inspire you. Creating a convincing look for something like this requires a degree of research into

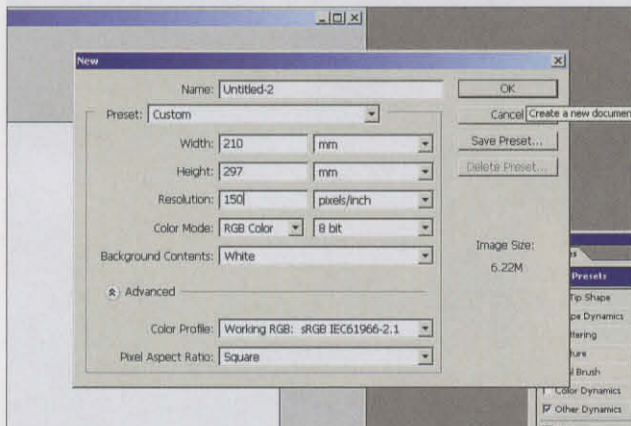
your inspiration, and an understanding of what the covers were trying to achieve. I'll start with the basic production of the image for the cover, from sketching through to final image.

Then I'll show the techniques for ageing and presenting the finished cover as a complete image. This is a dark and scary workshop, so only continue if you're prepared to find out what made that scraping noise in the attic...



1 Getting started

I normally start with a few thumbnails, but in this case I had an idea of what I wanted to do from the beginning, so I sketched the rough out straight away. I create a new document in Photoshop, usually A4 at 150DPI. It's easy to upsize later to 300DPI doing this, as you just double it. If the composition seems to be growing as you draw, you can always stretch it out using the Crop tool.



2 Sketching

I rough out using the Conte Pencil in Photoshop with Shape Dynamics on, as this gives you some nice, sketchy 'thicks and thins'. I'm going for a fairly straight-on composition, with a simple background. The covers of old detective novels used to concentrate on the figures and lighting for feel, and kept the background simple, as text would usually cover much of it.

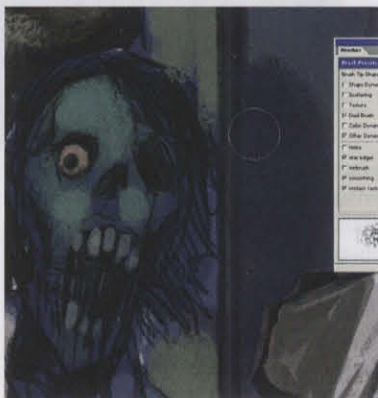


3 Initial colouring

My first colouring is often fairly messy! I create a new level and set the layer mode to Multiply. I don't worry about detailing yet, just where I want the light sources and how I want colour to set the mood. I use a custom brush to blob in colour, which is easy to make: Hard Round, with Spacing set to 10, Wet Edges on, and a Dual Brush option with a heavy texture such as Plastic Wrap Light.

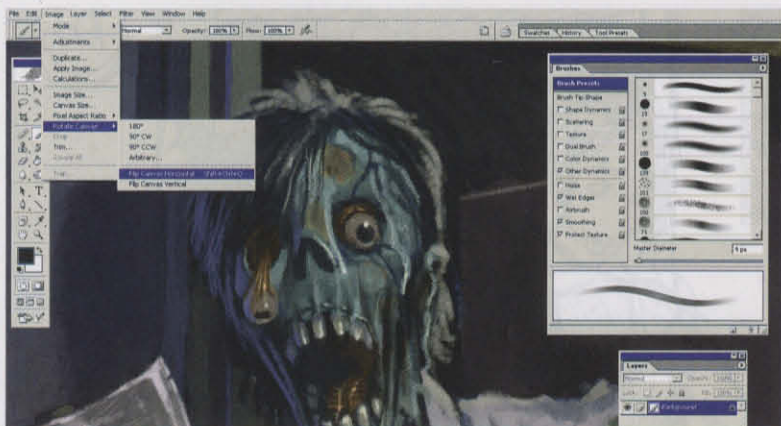
4 Body colour

From here on it's a basic process of building up the colour. I work my image up by starting with the faces and working out from there, painting skin and textural information to build up tone and shading. It's better to work out of dark into light, with the final painting stage being highlights. Because I'm after a fairly cartoony image, my detailing will be very selective; concentrating on faces and accessories, leaving brushmarks to provide a suggestion of detail in the other areas.



5 Flip the image

A good tip to make sure there are no glaring errors in the drawing/painting process is to constantly flip the image, giving you a new perspective on how you are working. I've set up a personal shortcut for this which you can do yourself in the Keyboard Shortcuts in the Edit menu. This way I can flip as part of my work flow and it becomes intuitive as I work, constantly switching back and forth. It also eases brush making when working against your natural left- or right-handedness.



6 Flatten the layers

At some point, I flatten the layers – usually after I've laid down the body colour to avoid focusing too much on the original drawing, but this is personal preference. You can carry on making decisions on new layers – if they work, flatten them. This keeps the working file size down too, and speeds up Photoshop.

7 Changing your mind

As the image develops, certain things don't always work. Don't be afraid to change your mind. For example, the axe in the sketch was hanging at the zombie's side. I decided to bring it up to head height, giving him more intent. I brought out the girl's hand holding the zombie's finger to make it clearer what she was doing. I lassoed the original hand then cut and pasted it into a new position.

8 Character design

Deciding how your characters will look can date them specifically. If you're setting them in the 60s, make sure they at least have a 60s look: researching outfits can be very important. The zombie wears a generic shirt and trousers so could fit almost anywhere, but the girl's clothes and hair are essential to the period. She's dressed in a pencil skirt and tight blouse that put her in the right time.

9 Highlighting

Particularly with the zombie, highlighting is very important. I want him to look rotten and glistening. With the main colour on him fairly subdued with desaturated tones, it's satisfying to select a hard-edged brush with Shape Dynamics on and add highlights. A dab of bright colour on areas such as the eyeballs and guts makes them appear wet.

PRO SECRETS

Enlarging images

The Crop tool isn't just there for making the canvas smaller. Drag the Crop tool over the whole image, and using the little boxes on the sides and corners you can stretch the canvas out to a larger desired size. Make sure your background colour is what you want, or matches your existing one, otherwise you'll be undoing it straight away!



10 Shadow

I often leave my final lighting till the end. If, like me, you end up always working a little toward lighter rather than dark, a good way to achieve dark shadows and moodiness is to flatten the image and duplicate the layer. Set the top one to Multiply and desaturate it a little. The whole thing will now look too dark. Select the Eraser with a fairly soft-edged brush and maybe a Dual Brush option for a bit of texture (once again Plastic Wrap or a similar brush will do for this), and start to erase the areas you wish to stand out from the shadow. The characters will start to appear out of the darkness and you can control the areas of shadow with the pressure you apply.



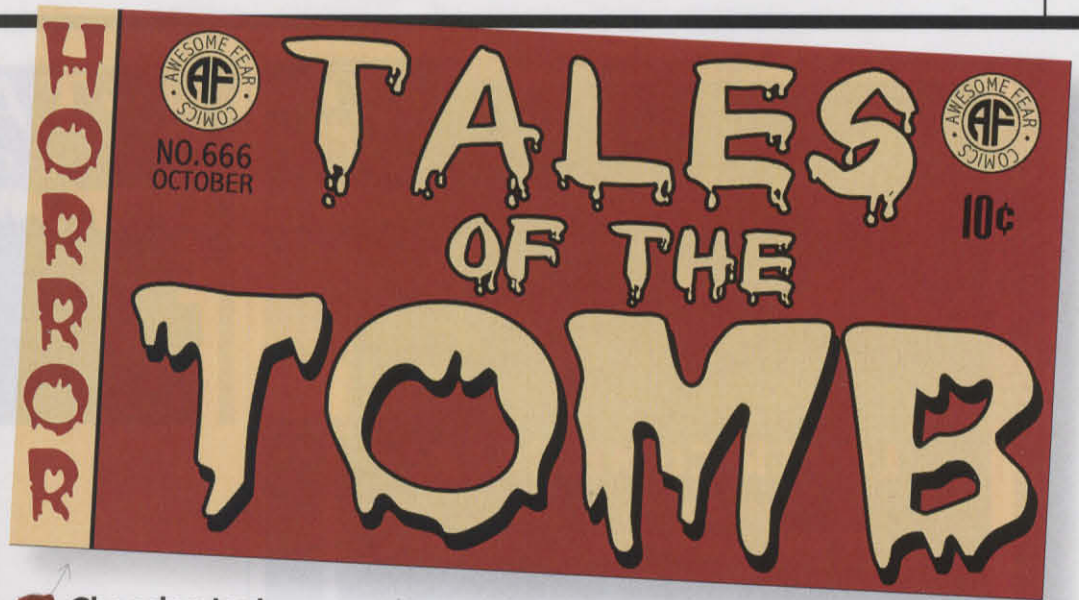


11 Texture overlay

Before I finish this section, I want a bit of texture on the walls to break up some of the flatness of the colour. What I use is a personal texture that's basically a photograph of damaged plaster with a green hue, broken with white. I drag this over my image and stretch it to cover the whole area. Set this layer to Overlay at about 55 per cent Opacity. I erase the areas I don't want to have texture on, in this case leaving the walls. It breaks up the colour and gives more depth to the image. Texture overlay is fun and can bring some interesting results, but shouldn't really be overused as it can distract, and is only there to enhance your existing mark-making.

12 Upsize image

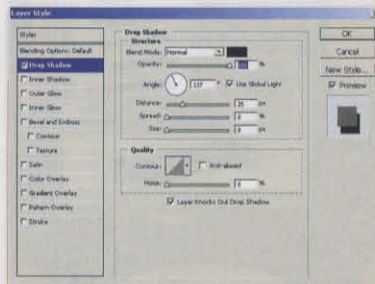
As I said earlier, I tend to start working on an image at a relatively low resolution, so before I start adding text and graphics, I enlarge the image by about 50 per cent purely to add a few details and tighten up some of the edges that could look a bit blurry at a lower resolution. With a flat image it's now time to start adding the final touches.



13 Choosing text

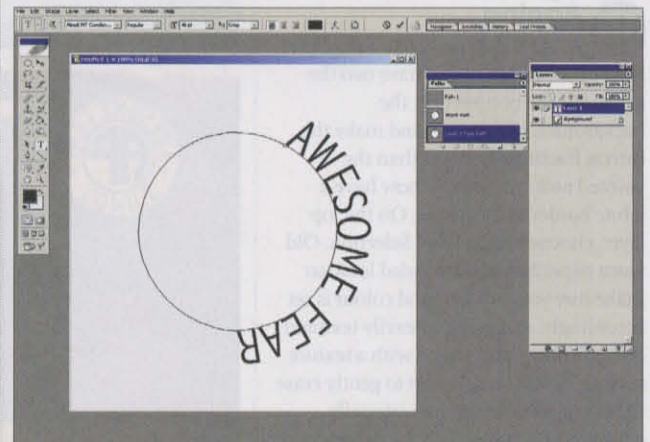
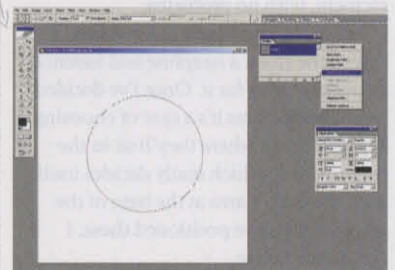
One of the most important parts of a comic's cover is the text. Strong dynamic typefaces, often totally bespoke to the cover, are integral to the final look. Horror comics usually use fonts that are 'alive' with dripping blood and bold colour. A quick search for free horror fonts on the internet will bring back a copious choice, and I've selected a couple, Creeper and Wet Paint, from a website called http://simplythebest.net/fonts/horror_fonts.html. I'll use these with old favourites like Abadi MT Condensed, which is sans serif and easy to read.

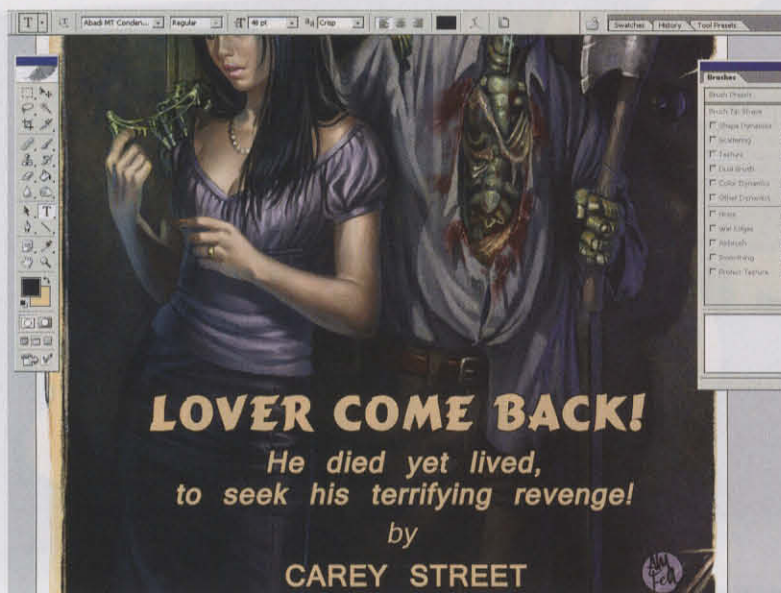
I decide to emulate the EC look and have about a third of the image devoted to the text, which is usually on a coloured background. I cut and paste my image about a third down the canvas and on a new level fill in the empty area with a mute burgundy colour, and at the side a cream strip for the vertical text. I select Creeper as the main font for 'TOMB' and 'HORROR' and Wet Paint as the secondary one for 'TALES of the...' 'TOMB' is set to 190 points, and I scale 'TALES of the' using the Transform tool. I put a drop shadow on TOMB and start on the logo for Awesome Fear Comics.



14 Using paths

To get the logo text to go round the central circle, I use Paths. Firstly, bring up the Paths window from the dropdown menu. Using the Elliptical Marquee tool and holding down Shift, select a circle. In the Paths window create a new path and make it a 'work path'. Select the Type tool and click on the edge of the circle. The text cursor appears and all text you type will follow the edge of the circle. When you've done this, click Commit Edit, and you can now Transform this to fit.





15 Final text

Once I've completed the graphical elements on the title area, including the text, I merge these layers, making sure the main image of the characters is still separate and underneath. I can then erase the area where I want the top of the zombie's head to go over in to the title area; a common feature of comic covers. Now those layers have been merged I can erase the drop shadow, a vector element, with no problems.

However, I still need to produce the title of the story, a strapline and invent a fictional author for it. Once I've decided on these elements it's a case of choosing a typeface and where they'll sit in the composition, which really decides itself with the darker area at the base of the image. When I've positioned these, I flatten the image.

16 Ageing

To age the cover, create a duplicate layer of the image so you have two the same. Fill the bottom one, the background, with white, and make the canvas fractionally larger than the painted area. You should now have a white border to the image. On the top layer, choose Select>Load Selection. Old worn paper has a cream faded look, so make sure your background colour is set accordingly, and using a heavily textured eraser brush, (hard round with a texture such as Plastic Wrap), start to gently erase the edges of the image, occasionally cutting in a bit as though the paper's torn.



PRO SECRETS

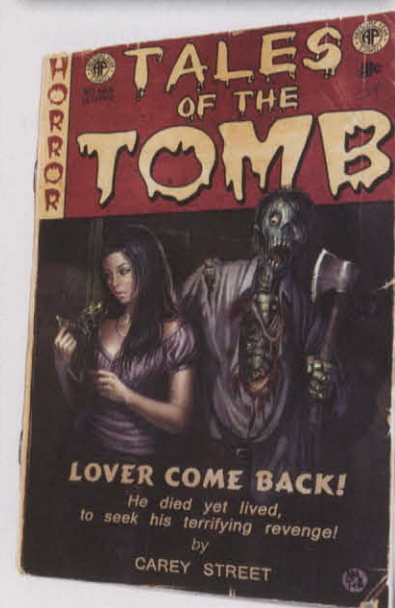
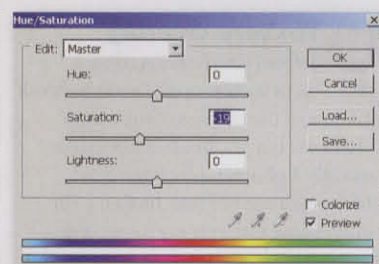
Transforming text

Once you've typed your text you can scale it and transform it with the Transform tool and it's still editable as text. Only when you rasterise the type (Layer>Rasterise>Type) can you no longer change what you've written. Rasterising essentially converts vector-based artwork, such as text and layer effects, into pixels that you can edit.



17 Creased up

Add more creases along the binding side as this is where any comic gets its main beating, and perhaps a fold or two on the corners. This requires a degree of research, so look at how old comics crease. The final tweak to ageing is a decent texture overlay with random marks, stains, folds and tears. Using one I've adapted from various sources, I enlarge it to fit the canvas and set it to Overlay in the layer modes and take the Opacity to about 60 per cent, erasing certain areas to give a randomness to the marks. Finally, I flatten the image, reduce the saturation a little and the picture's done.



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Photoshop CREATE A ROBOT CONCEPT

Keith Thompson runs you through the process of creating a robot concept design, from sketches to final touches

For this workshop, I'm going to guide you through a traditional artistic process involving pencil on paper, through to the digital process – using Photoshop – to create a robot concept. Note that the specific artistic techniques used in the following would simply be one way to come to something closely resembling the finished result. This is just the best way for me.

The initial step in any concept design is often nebulous and regrettably hard to

detail, it being an idiosyncratic process often unique to the artist. There are two common approaches to the conceptual realisation of your design, and these are applicable to cases where you have a detailed brief or a completely open slate to work with.

One is the on-paper shotgun effect, where you put down a rapid series of thumbnail sketches, often simple silhouettes, and begin to home in on areas that catch your eye. Another approach is to obsessively roll detailed images around in your mind's eye for a

period of dedicated time before laying down a single, definite thumbnail sketch to ensure that the visual imagery is working. The latter technique is how this particular design will be created.

For this robot concept, a time and setting has been decided upon: a relatively near future in a post-nuclear war Europe. Despite no background or additional elements, this environmental concern will run as an undercurrent through the appearance of the robot. The robot itself would match its setting with a bleak, worn and muddled impression.

Artist PROFILE

Keith Thompson

COUNTRY: Canada
CLIENT LIST: Harper Collins, Quarto, The Gnomon Workshop



Keith Thompson is a freelance artist who specialises in

concept art for a variety of applications, including books, movies, video games and role-playing games. He's written several books teaching the creation of concept art. His work's been featured in the Spectrum art annuals and has been displayed at the Museum of American Illustration. www.keiththompsonart.com

DVD Assets



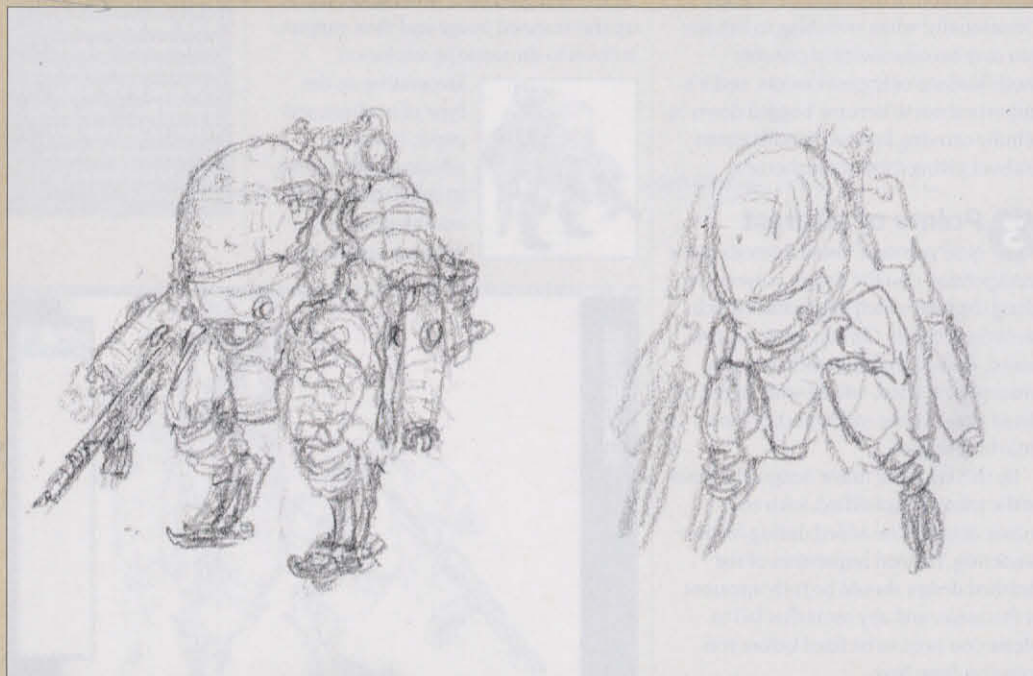
The files you need are on your DVD in the Keith Thompson folder, which is in the Workshop section.

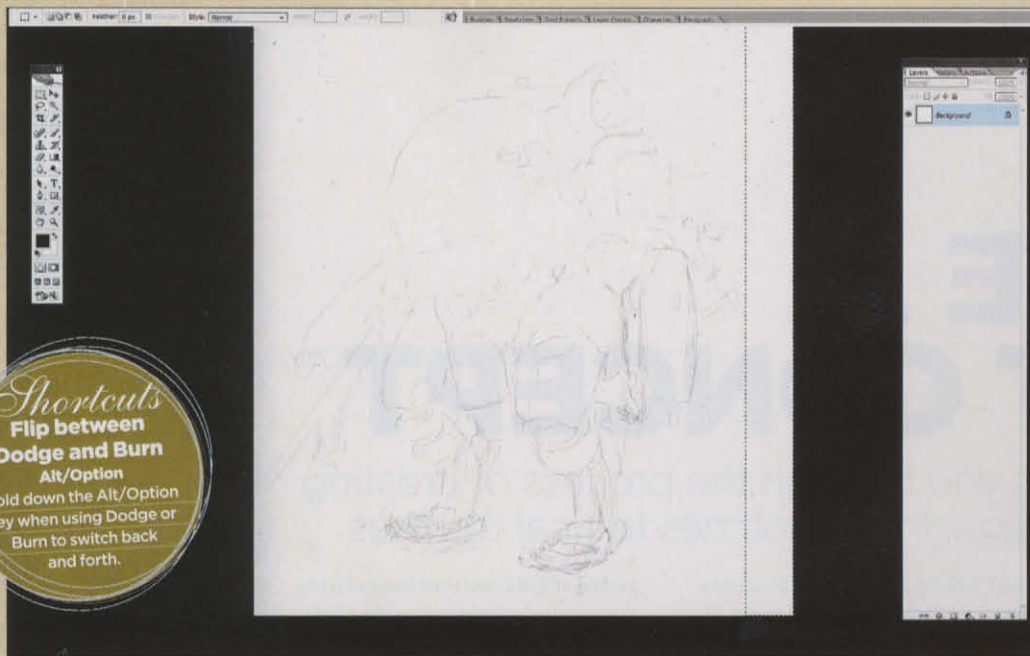
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS3 (demo)

1 Thumbnail sketch

This is the culmination of the imaginative development of the robot. The major elements of the design are first and foremost defined by the setting of the robot. In this case, it exists in a fresh post-cataclysmic near future. Conceptually, this will actually encompass the relics of a technologically developed near future and plunge these themes into a shattered, primitivist world.

A broad, tank-like body is the central approach to the robot's silhouette and initial impression. This is padded even further with contrasting additions, which merge the technologies of two widely varying situations in one concept. The robot will be loaded down with scavenged junk, with parts of its plating buckling and additions haphazardly tied and taped on. A quick secondary thumbnail sketch explored making the robot slightly more agile, but this lost the desired feel and went unfinished.





2 Sketched layout

This is the line work for the full-size design, and it'll be carried forward to the finished artwork from here. This closely mimics the thumbnail. It's possible for you to actually blow up your thumbnail, transferring it to paper to work over, or tracing it on a light table. This can preserve the proportion and gesture of the original sketch, but can also prevent you from introducing more visual sophistication in the larger depiction. Occasionally, when switching to full size you may become aware of possible modifications or improvements, and it's important not to become bogged down in blindly carrying forward specifications without giving these some thought.

3 Points of interest

New points of visual interest can be incorporated into the design at every step along the way, which helps create a rich layering of depth. Certain elements I've added, such as the large sockets on the breastplate section, will be worked out in detail later – at the moment they look a little bit like eyes.

By this stage the major design elements of the robot are solidified, with only minor details to be added during further rendering. The real impression of the finished design should be fully apparent at this stage, and any areas that fail to please you need to be fixed before you move on from here.

4 Scan the line work

Now I'm going to scan the pencil line work: the rest of my work will be done digitally. It's important that the pencil work meets your standards at this stage because it won't really be possible to directly modify this line work without returning to the drawing, rescanning it and transplanting it into the digital stage. It becomes a whole job of its own.

It's a good idea to scan at a resolution higher than you plan working on. Clean up this scanned image and then convert it down to the working resolution.

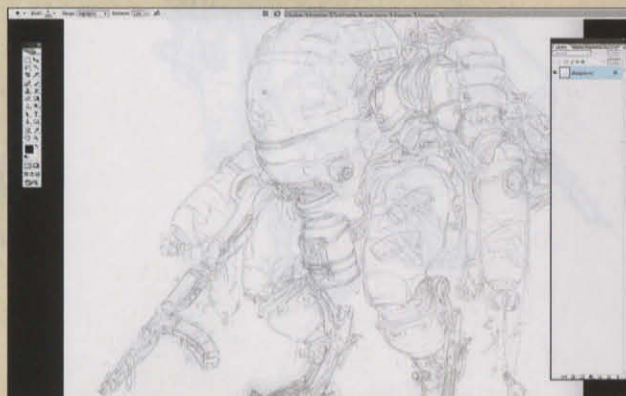


Depending on the type of medium and paper, it may be advantageous to scan in colour and take advantage of the ambient hue variety.

PRO SECRETS

Back it up!

As you work it can be a good idea to stagger your progress through a series of files. For example: robot01.psd, robot02.psd, and so on. This enables a progressive backup in case of a saved mistake or corrupted file, and also enables you to go back and grab parts of the artwork that may now be flattened. Ensure you keep track of the newest file so you do not return to the task and accidentally redo work already completed in another file.



5 Greyscale value

I do a mask of the character (in the case of an artwork depicting a scene, every major element may have its own mask) made with a layer and a colour fill, which I then set to an Opacity of 0 per cent. You can return to this mask by using the Magic Wand on the layer, and any modifications can quickly be made by erasing or adding to the colour fill. Shadows are loosely laid in with an Airbrush. I use a white fill set on Multiply on a new layer above, with the Burn tool set to Highlight. Remember to keep the shading basic and consistent – it should not appear perfectly shaded at this stage because this process is more intended to designate areas of shadow.

6 Canvas ground

Now I lay an undercoat or base texture over the shaded line work. The hue of this base will affect the unity of the finished piece, so I opt for a warm earth tone. This specific texture is a composite of several layers of cracked leather and paper. I like to compose my own individual textures and build them up with use. Your choice of textures will help give a uniqueness to every piece of artwork you create.



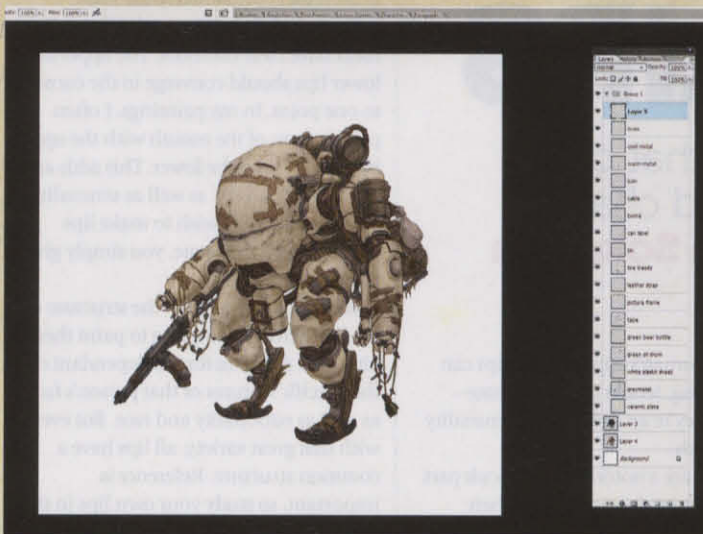
7 Highlight value

I flatten all the layers together and pass over the entire work with the Dodge tool set to Midtones (in the Options bar). Some slight fixes using the Burn tool, also set to Midtones, are worked in during the process. This stage is as much about drawing as painting, with highlights being applied in a line to support the existing black line work. An obvious variation of hue is starting to develop and will affect the colour glazes that follow. If you want, you could work up to this point completely in greyscale, and then use the Colour Balance menu to warm that with red and yellow in the shadows before proceeding to the glazing stage.



8 Initial glaze coat

I create a folder in the Layer palette set to Soft Light, with individual layers within it acting as colour glazes over the shaded drawing below. Each main hue has its own named layer and each coat is a flat glaze of colour, with the only variance being slight adjustments to the individual layer's Opacity setting. Remember that using this technique will actually change the value of the greyscale underpainting, potentially throwing the composition and visual hierarchy out of whack.



Shortcuts Map buttons

Map the buttons on your tablet pen to adjust the size of your brush on the fly. Playing around with the zoom will fine-tune the brush size.



9 Final glaze coat

Next, I create a secondary set of glazing layers that compound an additional colour to the previous glazes, adding a warmer hue in a highlighted space, or a cooler hue in the shadows.

Additionally, I create a series of layers outside of the Soft Light folder. These new layers are set to Multiply and are used to introduce a series of scans of splattered paint specifically created to simulate the mud, rust and mould on the robot. I'm sure to take care on their build-up, so that a complex, multi-layered coat is created, which conforms to the curving surfaces it lies upon.

PRO SECRETS

Texture library

Multiple layers of canvas ground interacting with each other increase depth and richness. Even if the compounded effect seems subtle, it'll still give more complex hues and textures in the finished piece. Build up a library of papers, painted undercoats and other materials you have scanned and then pick and choose between various combinations.

10 Elaboration

The entire work is flattened again, and additional passes with the Burn and Dodge tools deepen shadows and bring out focal points.

An old piece of paper is prepared and scanned as a backdrop and worked in behind the artwork. Take care that this backdrop supports the artwork without dominating it or clashing with it.

Whatever method you use in the conceptual stage of your project, be it a number of sketches or one focused design, make sure you get it up to scratch before going digital. It'll make your subsequent work much easier.





Artist PROFILE

Katarina Sokolova

COUNTRY: Ukraine



Katarina has been working as a CG artist for five years.

Her work is in the Exposé and Exotique books and a number of exhibitions. She also does commissions for private clients.

katarinasokolova.com

DVD Files

The files you need are on your DVD

In the Katarina Sokolova folder in the Workshop section.

SOFTWARE: Painter X (demo)

Painter PAINT REALISTIC LOOKING LIPS

They're an expressive part of the face that can reflect the inner state of the person and change to show a range of emotions. **Katarina Sokolova** shows you how to paint luscious lips...

I really enjoy painting portraits of beautiful, sexy, magical women. Beautiful lips make a woman's face even more alluring. Lips are the main characteristic of sexual attractiveness and sensuality, and the size of her lips plays an important

role in a woman's appearance. Lips can be charming, tender and passionate – indeed, they're an indicator of sensuality and warmth.

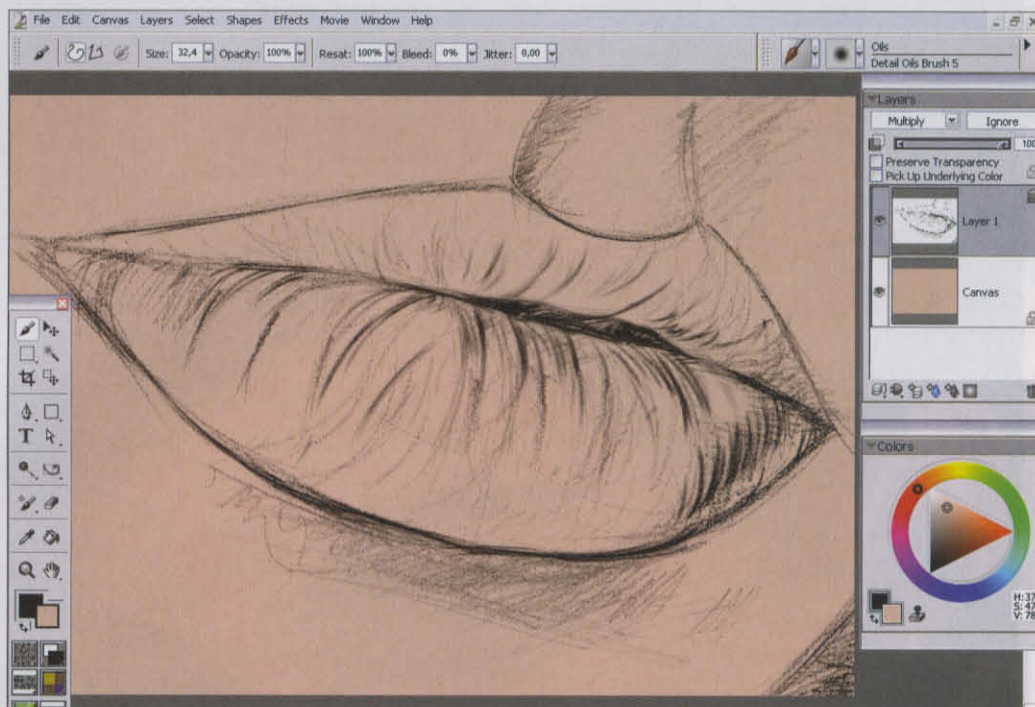
But lips are a notoriously difficult part of the face to paint, especially when working on a realistic-looking portrait.

Most of my painted characters have plump, sensual lips. They usually have rich make-up, too: I prefer to paint lips with red wine or coral lipstick. This attracts your attention to them and gives the face a degree of theatrical and decorative nuance.

The mouth, like the eyes, defines the overall look of the face. The mouth itself should be round, the upper and lower lips must have approximately the same fullness and the cavity on the upper lip must have clear contours. The upper and lower lips should converge in the corner to one point. In my paintings, I often paint a form of the mouth with the upper lip smaller than the lower. This adds an element of naivety, as well as sensuality, to the look. If you wish to make lips exciting and passionate, you simply give them more volume.

It's necessary to know the structure of the lips before attempting to paint them. Lips have different forms, dependant on the specific features of that person's face, as well as nationality and race. But even with that great variety, all lips have a common structure. Reference is important, so study your own lips in the mirror before you start.

Quick technique **Realistic lips**



1 Start with a sketch

I'm going to paint in the three-quarter perspective and I'll start with the general form of the mouth. I begin by lightly marking the position of the lips themselves, taking into account the proportions and perspective.

Then, using auxiliary lines, I define the general character of the mouth to fit the character in my painting. The upper lip protrudes forward relative to the lower lip. Therefore, since it catches more shadows, it's usually darker. The lower lip is usually lighter because its surface is

turned upwards. It becomes darker closer to the edges of the mouth. Also, the upper lip's prominence adds plasticity and expressiveness to its middle part, as well as to the overall form.

I sketch the shadow on the lips, leaving the shiny areas in the middle of the lower lip and on the top upper lip contour. Then I add dark accents to the lips' corners.

2 Move to Painter

It's time to add some colour. I've chosen a saturated, cold pink for this example. I create a colour palette for



PRO SECRETS

Adding emphasis

Emphasise the edges of both lips. With the upper lip, strengthen lines in its centre part, but on the edges of the mouth corners make them hardly visible. On the lower lip, emphasise the edges, marking out only its centre part. When connecting the bases of the oval forms don't touch the side edges, otherwise you'll lose expressiveness.

painting the lips. Using shadows, I then begin to emphasise the volume of the lips. I impose a shadow under the lower lip, at the same time defining the chin. I add shadows to the right side of the picture because on the portrait the light comes in from the left.

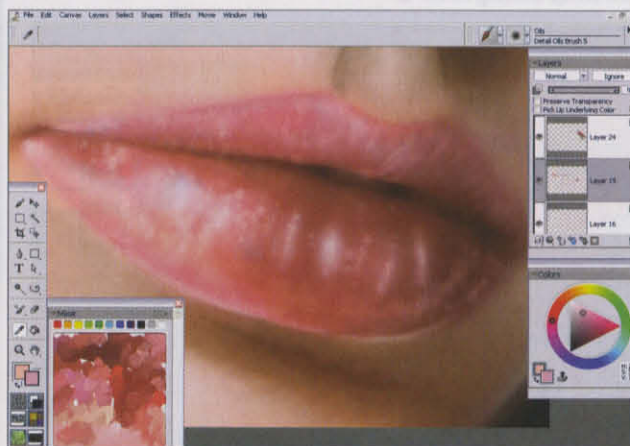
Another thing to note is that the lips are slightly open: if you look closely you'll notice that there's a tooth visible in the crack between the upper and the lower lips. I add a significant amount of shade to the left part of the lower lip. You need to be careful here, though, because the shadow on the lips shouldn't be too sharp. Therefore, the method I use is to softly wash it away in order for the red wine colour to blend smoothly into the basic pink colours.

I've also added some highlights to the shiniest areas of the lower lip, which immediately add volume.

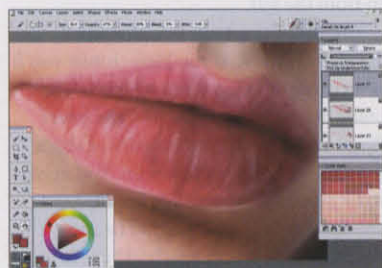
3 Stay soft

I avoid sharp lines and corners because lips have a soft form. Using a brush with high transparency, I apply the highlights all over the surface of the upper lip with small brush strokes. Besides the lips, I also paint the highlights around them. I add a colder, lilac-pink colour on the edge of the upper lip and under the lower lip, closer to the better-lit corner of the mouth. At this stage I work only with highlights. Using a large, soft brush, I paint a big stroke of light peach-pink colour on the lit side of the lower lip.

Then, using a soft brush of a smaller diameter, I paint brighter and finer light spots over the soft highlights. I use a mix of blue, peach and cold crimson. I've chosen a brush with some opacity for the lower lip and an almost transparent



brush for the upper lip. It adds an effect of very gentle, dark pink highlights on the upper lip. I also add some soft highlights on the dark side of the lower lip and some more bright, sharp and noticeable highlights in the centre of the lower lip.



4 Corner shadows

Now I paint in shadows at the corners of the mouth. I make them very light, but without them the lips would look plain and unnatural. I use dark coral and a small, soft brush with 30 per cent Transparency for painting the vertical folds on the lips.

Imagine the vertical lines that are passing through the surface of the lips and in their place paint several such folds (but not too many or the lip would turn out wrinkled). Paint directly on highlights, breaking their form. On the lower lip, I've painted fewer folds but have made them sharper and more apparent.

5 Accents

At the final stage of painting you should place the correct accents in your piece. What I try to do is emphasise the basic, thin contours of the lips' form. I create a new layer with Soft Light mode and, using the Airbrush, make several light strokes on the lips using a bright pink colour. This gives the lips a realistic flickering, shining effect.



MISSING! HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WORKSHOP?

Have you missed one of the workshops to create this portrait? Turn to page 93 to get hold of these back issues...



Issue 18 June 07



Issue 19 July 07



Issue 20 August 07



I've been trying to paint realistic skin. I did the nose and just kept going. Not sure if I like the rest. I think her pose is still a little off. It's coming along very slowly. Will post more later...



That image really is very impressive, although I'd like it much more if she had a different facial expression.



I need to learn how to syphon off all of your creative talent and bottle it up. I could make a fortune out of that stuff...



Hmmm, her left hand doesn't really appear to be on her hip (if that was your intention). It might look better if it was touching her belt. I really like the belt and all the details in this painting...



Join more than 3,500 artists just like *you* for advice, art competitions, constructive criticism and friendly discussion...

<http://community.imaginefx.com>



Artist PROFILE

Nick Harris

LOCATION: England

CLIENT LIST: Collins, DK, Puffin, Ladybird



Nick went digital in 2000 after 18 years of traditional methods. He believes that if you're not moving forwards, you're moving backwards. http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/nickilluss_portfolio

DVD Assets

The files you need are in the Nick Harris folder in the Workshops section.

SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS3, Painter X and ArtRage 2.2 (demos)

ArtRage, Painter & Photoshop CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATION

Nick Harris prepares a fantasy image to accompany a story that's aimed at a younger audience

In this workshop, I'm going to create an illustrative piece of fantasy art designed to appeal to children. That's what I've spent the past 25 years doing. Illustrating for children doesn't just mean boosting the colours and adding fluffy bunnies, even for the younger age ranges. Don't

underestimate your audience. They're young and inexperienced – not stupid. Think more in terms of creating imagery for adults who may need more clarity in what's going on, and who aren't afraid to laugh.

My natural style suits the 8-14 age range, so that's what this workshop's going to focus on. There are some basic





ARNOLD

Nick is a talented artist who paints a wide range of subjects, including Arnold for a Halloween contest.

ground rules that commissioning editors in the Western world will usually insist you follow:

- No nudity.
- Moderation in the representation of any violence.
- Avoid offensive racial stereotyping.

The brief for this workshop doesn't specify an image subject. That's more freedom than I'm usually given.

I've lifted the recent theme 'Deity' from a weekly challenge at www.imaginefx.com to illustrate. The image I create needs to make the viewer want to know more about the story behind it, so I have to come up with ideas for that. I want it to be fun, with interesting characters. It'll help if there's a character the young reader can identify with. You'll find the short story to accompany this workshop on your DVD.

Welcome to the tale of Deity and Nighty: The Half-Light Hullabaloo...



DRAGON HOARD

A layered book plate for a pop-up book about dragons that Nick did for Fernleigh Publishers last year.

1 Thumbnail and think

I doodle some quick ideas in ArtRage 2.2, keeping it very loose. I write things down as well as draw – wordplay is a useful tool to gather ideas. I have the choice of portrait or landscape format, but have to keep in mind that two-thirds of the space could be covered with type. I settle on the bad pun Deity-Nighty as the basis for an idea.

2 Character sketches

My story idea is this: a goddess of the day and a god of the night squabble over who reigns at dawn and dusk. The young heroine gets caught in the middle. I go with a double page and have our protagonists divided by the gutter, with my heroine symbolically in-between. I don't use references, but I do have a number of artistic anatomy books handy. I start working on character sketches in ArtRage at 72dpi, saving them in PSD format. I strive for a powerful, grumpy god and a haughty, poser goddess.



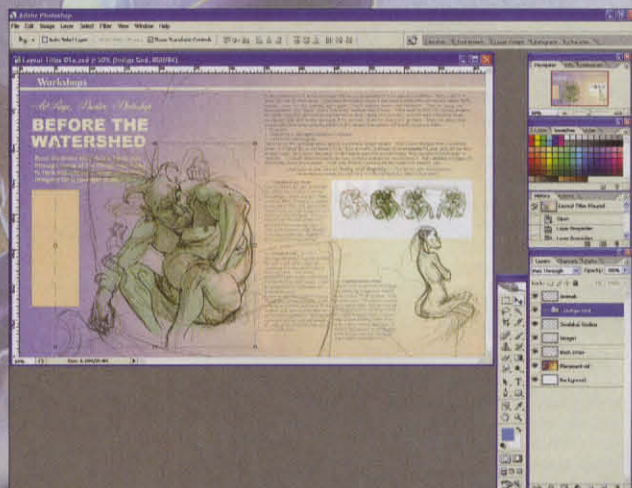
3 Rough it out

I open Photoshop and set up a document to the supplied dimensions (480x290mm). I keep it low res for now, then open my sketches and drag them into the document to play with. I create some type in Serif PagePlus12 (any DTP package will do) and dummy up a possible page layout based around my chosen thumbnail. I experiment with the character's scale and drop a Gradient layer over the top (set to Multiply) to kill the glaring white background.

4 Flesh it out

I open the PSD file in Painter and start painting. There's a couple of basic steps I use a lot. I block out solid body colour with the Soft Oil Pastel variant beneath the characters and other objects I want to keep isolated on separate layers, and set their drawing layers to Multiply Opacity. I use tinting brushes on layers over the top set on Multiply to lay washes of shadow and help with the form.

I create lots of layers, periodically grouping and merging them before it gets too cumbersome. I'm going for a dawn/dusk twilight sort of lighting, so use an orange-yellow/blue-purple colour range.



5 Grumpy old man

As I work up the form, I realise that this grumpy, half-naked old man just isn't doing it for me. You can see his nipples, too – that's a children's book no-no. I usually draw naked figures and clothe them later, but this character won't be appealing even in a tux. I quite like the drawing but it isn't right for this. Also, the composition's too static. Better to make big changes early rather than struggle on with an idea that isn't working.

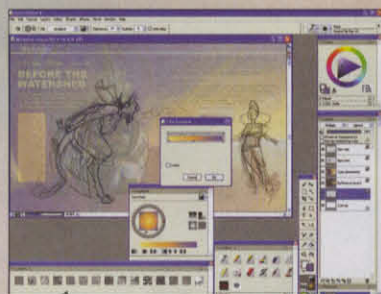


Shortcuts

Rotate the canvas

Spacebar + Alt/Option
Press and drag in the image to rotate the canvas.
Works in ArtRage2 and Painter.

In depth Children's book illustration

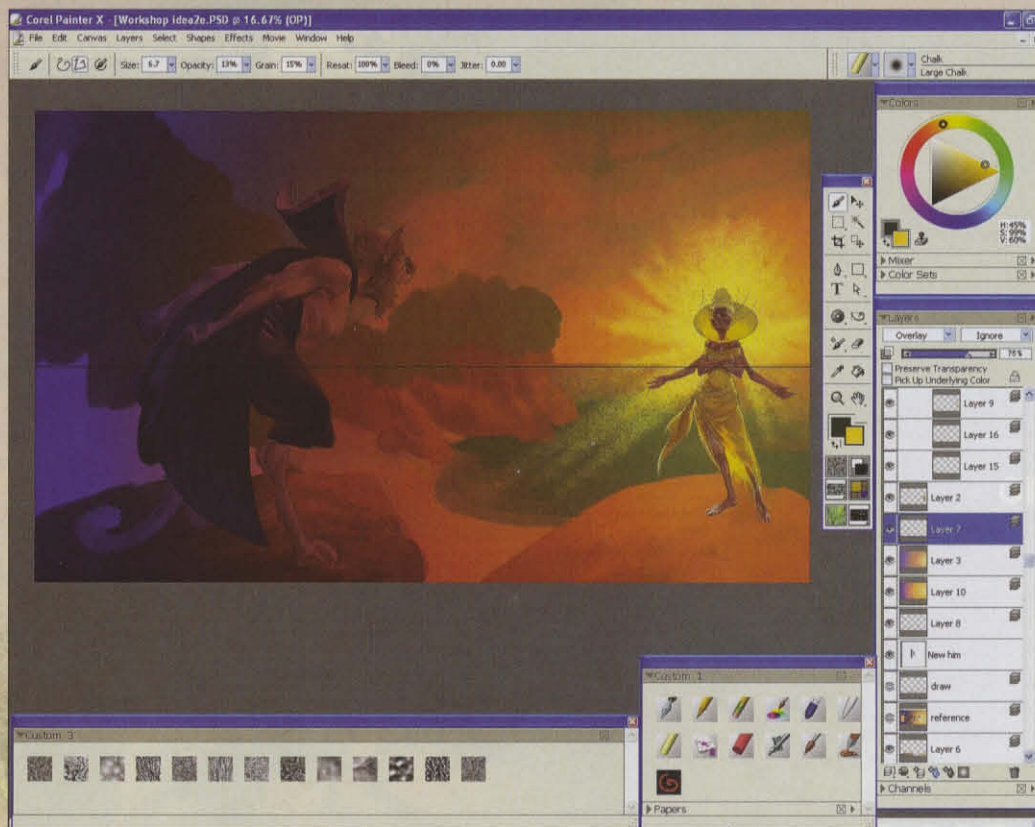


6 Add some action

Using the same rough comp I rethink the characters, this time more dynamically posed. I flatten the old version and use it as a reference layer at low opacity underneath. I increase file DPI to 300 and open the Gradient Editor to add a suitable radial sunrise colour base on a separate layer. If you increase DPI after laying a gradient, it can adversely affect its smoothness.

7 Clarify your idea

I firm up some of the background shapes and use diagonals to add movement. My story setting is a sultry island, so I add a loose shoreline background. Colours still conform to the original idea. The god, who I've named Indigo, has colour (Pastel) and tone (Tinting brush) on separate layers, grouping them to stay organised. The Just Add Water variant in the Blender brush category is great for blending body colour such as the pastel work. I keep Indigo's sketch drawing at the bottom of his stack to refer to. To help explain their character associations with the moon and sun, I use blues and purples with the god, and oranges and yellows with the goddess.



8 Begin tidying

The character drawing needs cleaning up. I use a plain eraser and the Round Tip pen set to around ten per cent Opacity for the line work. I then add more values to the body colour using the soft oil pastels. All the time I'm making these adjustments, I'm sure to keep in mind the two main light sources: a primary golden one shining from the sun on the horizon, and a weaker blue one coming from the left, out of shot. I also intend to add a radiant sunny glow coming from within the goddess herself, and a hint of stardust emanating from the god. Concentrate on the main lighting first, though. Turn off the gradient to see the true colours.

9 Lighting is key

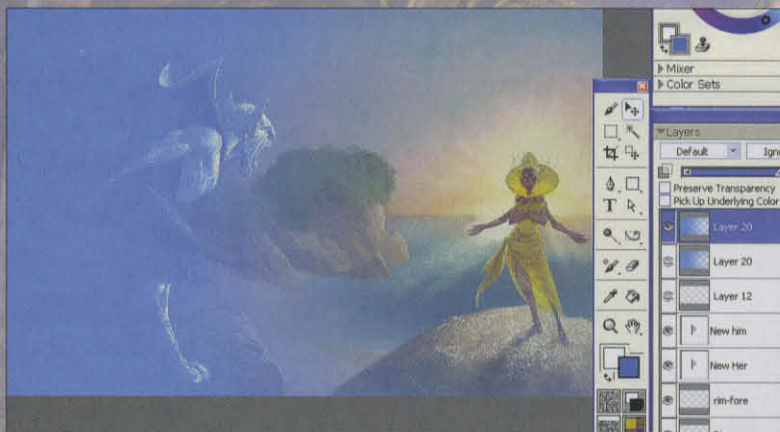
Lighting is essential to creating a magical mood. Laying a gradient over the top in Multiply transparency mode is a great unifying tool but may disguise detail in the lights and darks. I want the goddess to glow, so I raise her layer above the gradient and add light rays just behind her. These were crudely done with a heavily textured paper and the Large Chalk. Painter comes with some great paper textures but I also make my own, sampled from images (I've included them on the DVD). I then duplicate the warm gradient layer.

PRO SECRETS

Custom palettes

If you're using Painter IX or X, take advantage of Custom palettes. You can drag out your favourite brushes and papers into one palette if you wish, then drag that round the canvas where you want it. Set up separate Custom palettes for different styles of work, ready to pull out when you need. Long term, it'll save you hours of time spent trawling through the Brush Library lists.





10 Unifying Shadows

I add textures to the background using the Large Chalk and various papers. I use the Paper palette to vary scale and intensity, and make a Leafy brush to add foliage. Using the Impressionist variant of the Artists brush category, I add texture to the foreground rock. Then I add another radial white/blue Gradient layer. I draw and paint with warm white, defining the light areas and erase large sections of sky where there shouldn't be shadow. I set it to Multiply and reduce the Opacity.

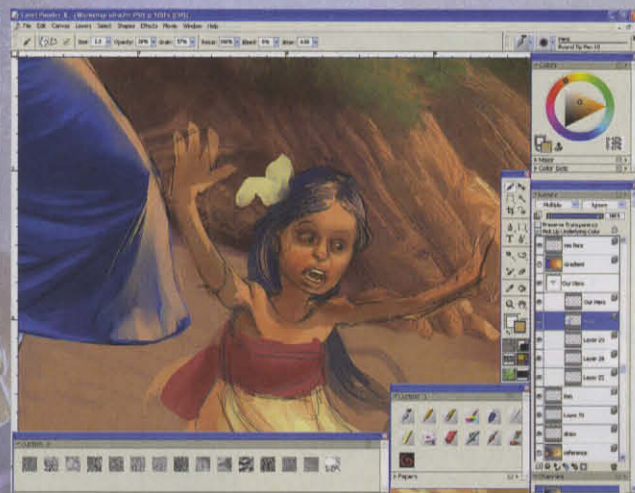


11 Work it up

I zoom in and tighten up the background a bit more, adding detail with the Chalk and Pen. I'm trying to make it look like the low sun is picking out the edges and form of a forested landscape in the dark shapes.

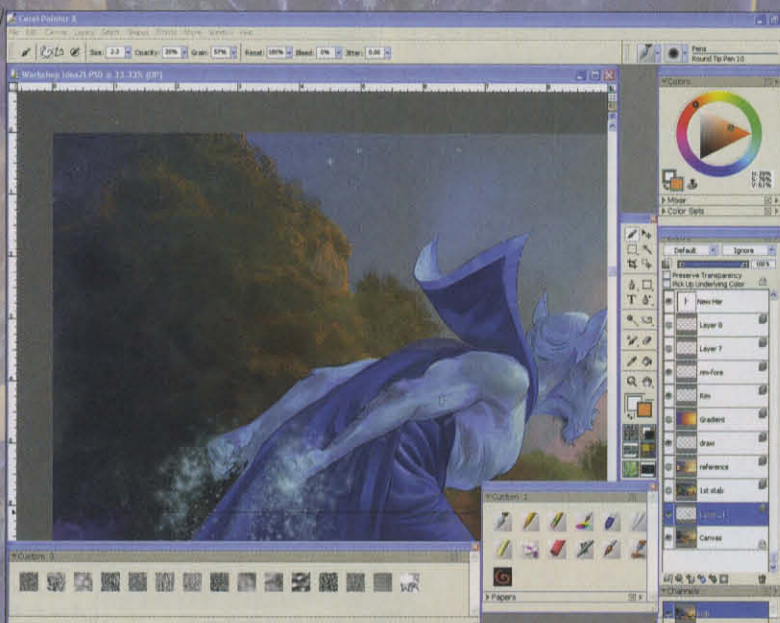
12 Fun time

The basics are now blocked in but as I said earlier, I want these characters to have a whole backstory to them rather than merely existing in the context of this illustration. So, to flesh out the story, I add a selection of interesting little



creatures that are going to fit in around the main characters.

At the same time, I slot in our heroine, roughly for now. All these new additions are going in on separate layers so I can reposition them if needs be. For this section of the illustration, I'm making constant adjustments as I go, repeating what I did in step seven with the Round Tip pen, Pastel and Tinting brush layers. I reduce the heroine's size and move her back a bit so I can draw the pose with her arms spread wider. In her original position, her arm was too closely aligned with the god's leg.



PRO SECRETS

Draw, draw, draw again

I trained as a traditional illustrator, and even working digitally I still think in terms of drawing and painting. It was drummed into me that an ability to draw well is a real asset, however you produce your finished artwork. I believe this still holds true. Practise - it's worth it, trust me. If you can get a handle on perspective, lighting and anatomy, it opens up all sorts of avenues to you. Be sure to work on your weaknesses as well as your strengths.



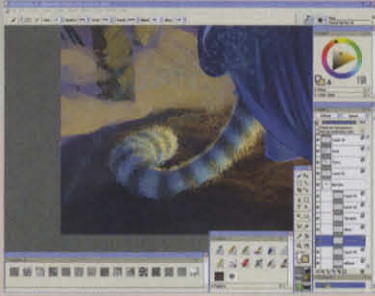
13 Cherry picking

I'm looking at the whole image and cherry-picking elements to work on. I use the Dull Pastel pencil to add some fluffy clouds. Then I work on the animals, who are there to lend empathy to the aggressive male character. To balance the equation, I add a snake and lizard as acolytes to the less scary goddess.

14 It's in the details

The main shapes and their tonal values are mostly sorted. The picture needs detailing, particularly the characters. I need to work on the hands

In depth Children's book illustration



and fluff up the god's tail a bit. I make a brush to help with the fur, as well as using the Round Tip Pen tool again.

15 Tweaky-tweaky

Time to do some tweaking. I notice the animals merging too much with the background values, so add another Gradient layer between. This time, I add a slight paper texture using the option in the drop-down menu listed under Effects>Surface Control. Pick Paper as the source for the texture. If you open the Paper palette before you start this, you can sample different papers and their settings live. I leave the layer on default Transparency mode at about five per cent. This moves everything above it in the Layers palette forward in the image.



16 Mind the gaps

This still looks a bit empty to me for a lush island, especially around the goddess. Assuming she's that powerful, wouldn't the plants adore her? How about adding some plant worshippers springing up around her? To draw all the flowers separately would take a long time, so I make a Petal brush to add to the Leafy brush I made earlier. They give the impression of detail. I've set them to use direction and have colour variability, and

Shortcuts
How to merge grouped layers
Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+X
Use this handy shortcut to quickly merge grouped layers in Painter X.



their size should also respond to pressure. I vary the colour as I go so it doesn't look too uniform, and work details on top by hand to break it up.

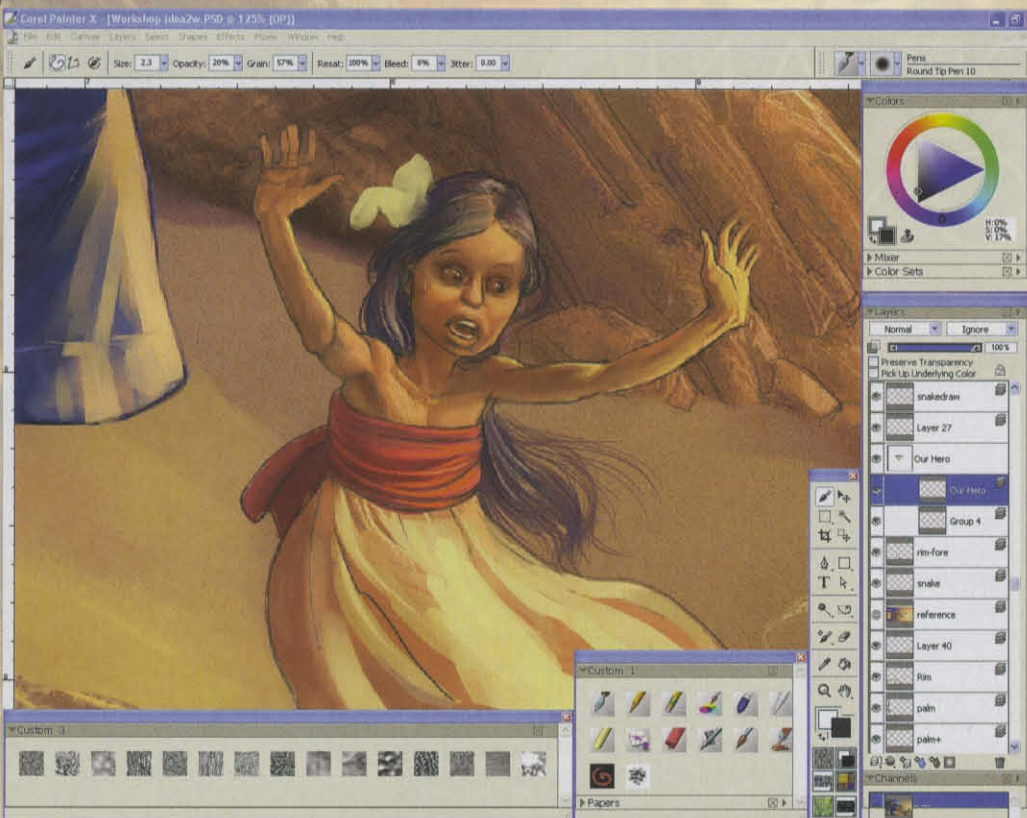
17 Edgy stuff

I then move around the image, tightening up edges and adjusting tonal relationships. Keep an eye on the piece as a whole, using Alt/Option to toggle the palettes on and off. I turn back on a warm gradient that's been wallowing unloved in the layer stack. It helps to make the blue/orange contrast stronger.



18 Finishing touches

I could leave it now, but often overcook my work. It's time to merge the layers together. I tweak Opacity settings as I collapse the different groups. Once flattened (saving versions on the way), I create a Levels Adjustment layer to see if I can boost the 'oomph' factor a bit. Unexpectedly, I realise I've finished!



Painter & Photoshop
PART THREE OF THREE

THE CUSTOM BRUSH GUIDE NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Artist PROFILE

Marta Dahlig
COUNTRY: Poland



Born in 1985, Marta Dahlig is a young and talented artist who has been working with Photoshop and Painter for years.
www.marta-dahlig.com

DVD Files

All brushes and screenshots can be found on the DVD in the Marta Dahlig folder in the workshop section.
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS3, Painter X (demos)

Marta Dahlig concludes her guide to custom brushes by revealing the best for painting environments and nature

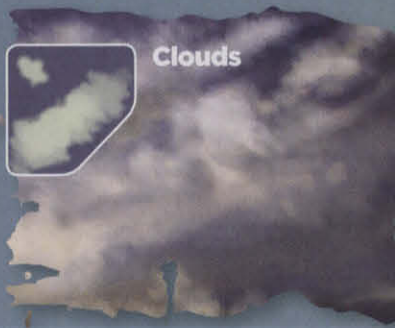
Custom brushes play an extremely important role in today's digital artist's craft, and while understanding them and how they can best be used was once just advantageous, now it's a basic requirement.

In this three-part workshop, I've tried to lay out the general rules and custom brush settings to as well as show some tips and tricks on unconventional ways to use them. The first part was devoted to painting characters, the second described

painting textiles. Now, we have come to the third and final part, which will be devoted to enhancing landscapes and everything that you might find useful for painting nature.

The majority of brushes described here are photograph based for the sake of realism and have been created in Photoshop. However, where possible, I am also going to write down the settings for standard Painter X brushes. You can find all of the brushes described here on your DVD.

Artist insight Custom brush guide



Clouds

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 25-50%
Flow: 100%
Spacing: 3%
Shape Dynamics:
 Size Jitter 20%
Minimum
Diameter: 9%
Scattering:
 Both axes, 137%
Other dynamics:
 Opacity and Flow
 Jitter: 0%

PAINTER

Chalk: Large
 Chalk
Opacity: 10-50%
Grain: 20%
Resat: 20-50%
Bleed: 0 %
Jitter: 0-1

This brush is quite a simple shape and consists of a few merged airbrush tips. It is very easy to use and very efficient for realistic renders, so long as you remember to switch the opacity and colours constantly throughout the painting process. To use it most effectively, first off sketch out the general cloud shape with an airbrush and try the brush out on top of it on a separate layer

All brushes
are supplied
free on
your DVD



Blades of grass

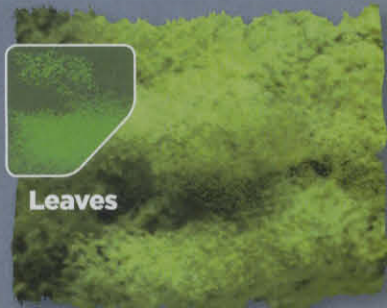
PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 5-50%
Flow: 100%
Spacing: 25%
Other dynamics:
 Opacity and flow
 Jitter: 0%

PAINTER

Unavailable

This brush is great for basic texturing of a grassy field. However, do not rely on it solely, as nothing can replace the hand-made touches. Once you have the basis done, pick an airbrush or hard round of a lighter colour and add some additional blades. For extra realism you can also add some loose leaves, sticks and so on. Once the texture is done, duplicate the layer with it, flipping it horizontally and setting its layer mode to Soft Light.



Leaves

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 5-30%
Flow: 100%
Spacing: 25%

PAINTER

Chalk: Large
 Chalk
Opacity: 50%
Grain: 25%
Resat: 18%
Bleed: 0%
Jitter: 4

This photo brush is extremely useful for painting leaves in distant backgrounds. Its edges are sharp, due to the photo extraction, so be sure to blur the painted leaf blobs from time to time to avoid artificial looking results. When shading with these brushes, try to gradually move on from darkest to lightest shades. Once done, paint some individual leaves with an airbrush on top of the area.



Tree bark

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 20-40%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

Unavailable

This is another brush that I extracted from an old photo I took a while back. Using it requires a bit of patience as the stamp has to be rotated continuously, but it enables you to create truly realistic effects after getting used to it. After you place it over an area, enhance the effect by underlining the cracked edges with a lighter stroke. This brush has a lot of functions and, aside from texturing bark, can be used for painting cracks, facial marks and scars.



Marble

PHOTOSHOP

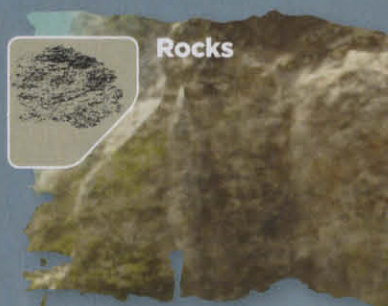
Opacity: 30-70%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

Unavailable

This is a wonderful brush extracted from a marble photo, which I use excessively for a multitude of things. It can be employed for general painting and texturing, texturing of flat stone surfaces and even skin deformities. It is most efficient when used over the desired area on a separate layer with its mode switched to Overlay, Multiply or Soft Light.

Workshops



Rocks

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 5-50%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

Unavailable

Painting rocks is extremely hard and time consuming. This brush can't be used to create a realistic rock from beginning to end, but it is extremely useful for creating a basic texture or for hinting at the detail during speed painting. Use it as a stamp, from time to time rotating the blobs. It's definitely most effective when you blur the outcome and regularly change the hues and brightness.



Butterflies

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 50-100%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

Unavailable

Butterflies are very common painting elements, yet quite time consuming. So, why not make your life a little bit easier? The brushes shown here were created from photos I found on the internet. They're extremely handy if you need to add detail to your painting but are feeling a bit lazy – I always use them when painting glades, forests and such.



General texturing

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 10-90%
Flow: 100%
Spacing: 5%
Shape Dynamics:
Size Jitter 55%
Minimum
Diameter: 9%
Scattering:
Both axes, 104%
Count: 5
Other dynamics:
Opacity and Flow
Jitter: 0%

PAINTER

Unavailable

I use this brush for speed painting landscapes, when I rarely switch between the brush types. This custom one is made out of some loose colour blobs – its ragged edges encourage smooth transitions between colours and so make this brush perfect for all fast jobs, as you don't need to constantly worry about colours not blending correctly. Use this brush as a typical hard round, constantly playing with the opacity and colour.



Cracked ground

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 10-80%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

Unavailable

This brush is a fast and efficient means to texture dried ground. Use it as a stamp, preferably on a multiply layer mode. It usually requires some editing and rotating, but generally greatly speeds up the painting process. Aside from its main use, it can also be handy for painting lightning.



Stars

PHOTOSHOP

Opacity: 10-100%
Flow: 100%

PAINTER

AIRBRUSH
Tiny Spattery
Airbrush
Opacity: 75%
Spread:
15 degrees
Flow: 2-4
Feature: 5-10

Missed parts
one and two?
Turn to page
93!

Now that is a fast way to paint a sky! Just run over the night sky with this brush, first with a larger size and higher transparency (for distant stars) gradually blurring and changing to smaller and more opaque. This brush is one of the most functional, as aside from its main purpose, it can be used to create such textures as: skin pores, brocade, smaller leaves, dust, enhanced grass and so on. ●



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Issue 19 July 2007



Learn how to make it in the world of game art, discover the perfect brushes to paint skin and hair with Marta Dahlig, and find out where JP Targete takes his sketchbook. Plus, meet the artists behind Halo, Half-Life 2, Heavenly Sword and Metal Gear Solid.

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More than 20 of the world's best sci-fi and fantasy artists give you 100 new ways to paint. Also, get to grips with tone, mix traditional and digital media, and meet Dehong He.



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“ Apply a noise layer to your painting at the end of the creation process and you’ll achieve more natural colour values ”



see page 96 for more

20 FANTASY ART TIPS

Artist PROFILE

Henning Ludvigsen

COUNTRY: Norway

CLIENTS: Fantasy Flight Games, Midway



Henning is a digital artist with basic traditional art education and 12 years' experience in digital art, design and illustration. He is art director of a computer game development company and works on private commissions and projects in his spare time.

www.henningludvigsen.com

From skin tones and highlights to misty valleys and glow effects, **Henning Ludvigsen** shares his top 20 pieces of advice for creating great fantasy art every time.

1 FANTASY SKIN

When painting skin for a fantasy piece, monochromatic tones are a good start, but even after experimenting with all the levels of colours and different skin types, you can end up with a monochromatic effect. Skin is always darker than you think, so don't take highlights too far, and use redder colours where skin is warmer.

2 THREE THINGS TO AVOID

A) Unless you can hide it, avoid using filters. There's nothing less painterly than seeing a large surface covered in a custom-made Photoshop filter effect. Why not use the effect as a vague base instead and work it over from there?

B) Effects such as lens flares and software-generated fire and cloud won't look natural unless they're done by hand.

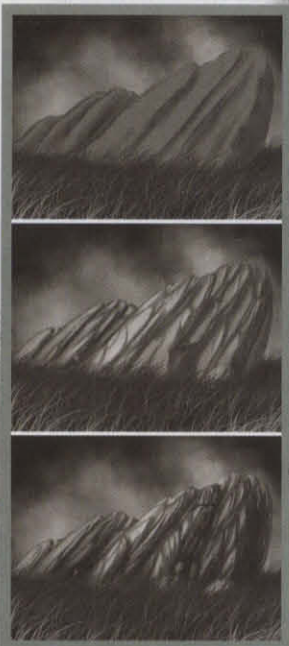
C) Avoid using the Smudge tool for the major parts of the painting process. Keep brush strokes clear, confident and bold.

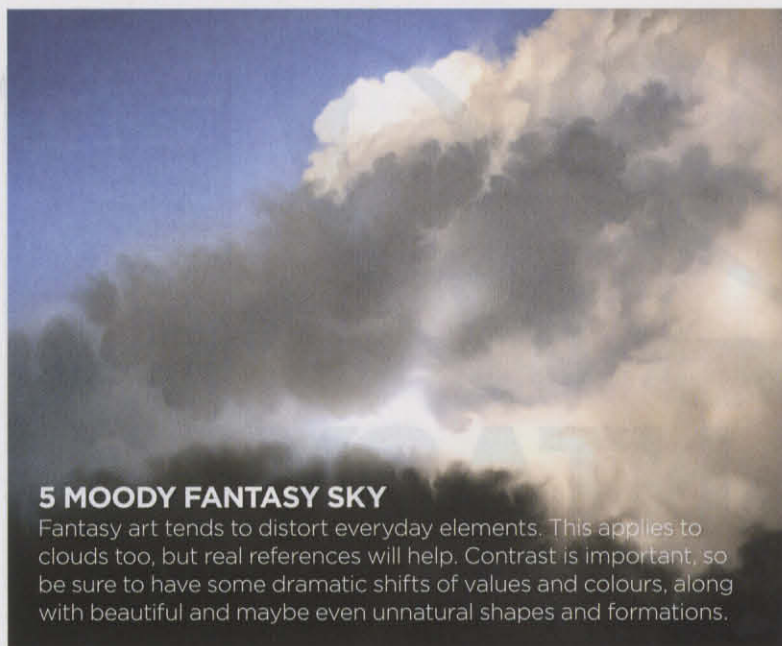
3 LEARN TO LIMIT YOUR COLOUR PALETTE

When legendary artists such as Frank Frazetta choose their colours, they try to keep them all related. Even skin colours are mixed with colours from the surroundings. Limit your range of colours, and play more with narrower selections of the palette. That said, make sure to keep your chosen colours varied enough to not look monochromatic. You don't need all the colours in the world to make your palette lush and rich.

4 ROCKS

When painting rocks, keep the highlights duller than you think. Contrast is still important, but you can still achieve this effect with colours that are close to each other contrast-wise. Narrow down the range of values but try to keep the lit faces more or less within the same areas of the palette. The same goes for the shadowed areas. A hard-edged brush is the best tool for this. Stay true to your light source, and add veins and textures where it feels natural.





5 MOODY FANTASY SKY

Fantasy art tends to distort everyday elements. This applies to clouds too, but real references will help. Contrast is important, so be sure to have some dramatic shifts of values and colours, along with beautiful and maybe even unnatural shapes and formations.



6 VISIBLE BRUSH STROKES

Get a traditionally painted effect by creating a greyscaled overlay texture that includes a vague canvas texture and brush strokes. Play around with some Palette Knife brushes and add dynamic criss-crossed brush strokes. Make sure the basic starting value for the background is close to the middle range: RGB = 128, 128, 128.

If you apply a light Emboss layer style to your brush strokes, you can get a vague 3D embossed look on the textured base. Set the Layer Blending mode to Overlay and adjust the Opacity slider until you're satisfied.

8 APPLY NOISE

Apply a noise layer to your painting at the end of the creation process to achieve more natural colour values. Make a new top layer, RGB = 128, 128, 128. Run Filter > Noise > Add Noise, set the slider at 400 per cent. Run Filter > Brush Strokes > Spatter; run the Blur filter a few times. Set Layer Blending mode to Overlay; Opacity at 3 to 10 per cent.



7 LAYOUT

Less is more when it comes to laying out fantasy art. Pick a simple idea and focus on this object in a bold and straightforward way. Heavy focus on symmetry can often be a good solution for a successful fantasy painting, as can making sure it balances well if you go for less symmetry and more elements.

9 SLIMY TENTACLES

Fantasy art requires monsters, and often slimy, shiny, disgusting ones. To add slime, follow these steps:



1 Copy the areas you want to make slimy into a new layer. Then make this layer greyscale.

2 Smooth the layer with a soft brush. Parts pointing at you should be brighter than those pointing away.

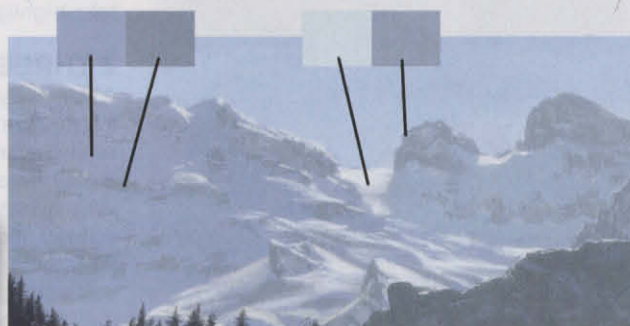


3 Run the layer through Filter > Artistic > Plastic Wrap. Keep the details to a minimum.

4 Set Layer Blending mode to Pin Light. Use Dodge to edit highlights in this layer, and paint strings of slime.

10 TEXTURED BRUSHES

Human imperfection is what gives art character. Custom brushes can help you emulate this imperfection. Download or make some textured brushes to give your pieces a bit of life.



11 MOUNTAINS

Use photos as a reference when painting mountains. A good tip is to limit your range of values. Make one value each for highlighted rock and snow, and the same for shadowed versions of the two. Keeping values limited and adding detailing with a hard-edged brush will make mountains look natural.



12 MANUAL GLOW

There are plenty of ways to apply automatic glow to objects in the different painting packages; from soft brushes to layer styles. To make your artwork appear as *painted* as possible, go for hard-edged brushes and paint it by hand instead. A glow doesn't have to be perfectly smooth, but it will still do its purpose and at the same time add more of your own personality to your piece.

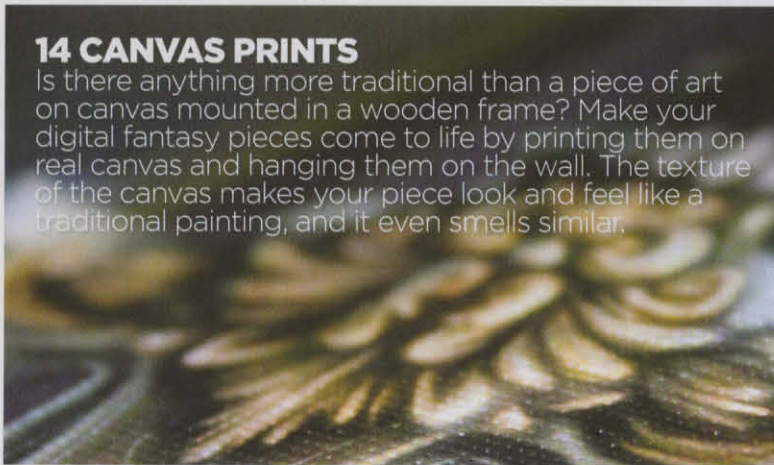


13 FANTASY GLOW

The romantic and fantasy genres are where glow effects are used most. Glows can add the extra touch – or leave you in the 80s if over-used. Add a flattened copy of your piece to a new layer on top of the others. Run Filter>Gaussian Blur, and play with the Linear Dodge blending mode and Opacity slider on the Layers palette.

14 CANVAS PRINTS

Is there anything more traditional than a piece of art on canvas mounted in a wooden frame? Make your digital fantasy pieces come to life by printing them on real canvas and hanging them on the wall. The texture of the canvas makes your piece look and feel like a traditional painting, and it even smells similar.



15 REFLECTIVE METAL THE EASY WAY

To create a base for metallic effects, copy the metal area into a new layer and make it greyscale. Smooth the surfaces with a soft brush and apply dark lines for etched details (bright for extruded details). Run the Chrome filter, set Blending mode to Colour Dodge, and play with the Opacity.



16 MIST IN THE VALLEYS

Divide the background into layers depending on distance. Applying a soft mist at the bottom, between each valley, can create an eerie feeling and add a lot of depth.

17 FORM-FIT TEXTURES

With textured layers, it can look like overlay textures are projected onto objects. To avoid this, make the noise layer cover more than you need, and use Photoshop's Liquify tool. Use the Forward Warp tool, tick the Show Backdrop box, select the base object and set Mode to Behind, then adjust the Opacity so you can see through the texture layer. Warp-change the texture layer so it fits the object.



18 CHECK YOUR GREYSCALE VALUES

Fantasy art usually contains dramatic colours and contrast. A good piece of fantasy art should also work in greyscale, so check your greyscale values every now and then to get a handy overview of how your work is coming along.

A quick way of checking this is by keeping a layer on top of your layer-stack with 100 per cent white colour and Blending Mode set to Colour. You can then toggle between colour and greyscale mode.

“The fantasy genre is where glow effects are used most. They can add an extra touch – or leave you in the 80s”

19 DISTRIBUTE YOUR DETAILS

Try to distribute detailing throughout the piece onto areas that are important. Remember that even rough brushstrokes can appear complex if accompanied with detailed areas.



20 LIMIT YOUR HIGHLIGHTS

An important overall tip for realistic results is to avoid extreme highlights, especially on fabric and skin folds. Overly strong highlights on skin may cause an artificial appearance and give a comic book style to the character. Keep your greyscale base values under control.



On your DVD

WELCOME TO THE FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX COMPANION DVD

This month, the ImagineFX DVD brings you an exclusive Poser model...

We've included many free Poser models in ImagineFX over the past year, but this month we have one that's a little special. The kind people over at Sixus1 Media have created an exclusive model just for ImagineFX readers: it's a pretty scary-looking hairless wolf and is perfect for any Poser artists wanting to add a touch of terror to their art. You can only find it here on this month's DVD.

There's a wealth of other freebies, including video tuition, free photos and wallpapers, and more. And over in the Workshop section we have all the files you need to follow the tuition in this month's magazine.



Tom Rudderham,
DVD Editor

Contact details

Want to send us feedback?

Like to see your artwork or software on this DVD?

Contact us using the details below...

Reader artwork: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Email the DVD editor: Tom Rudderham, tom@imaginefx.com

Postal address: ImagineFX magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Phone: +44 (0) 1225 442244

DVD issues: support@futurenet.co.uk

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ISSUE 21
SEPTEMBER 2007

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

DVD
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the files you need
to complete this
issue's workshops.

LOVER COME B
He died yet lived,
look his terrifying re



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Sci-fi and fantasy book cover
illustrator Charles Bernard
reveals more secrets behind
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Free armour photos

These free high-resolution photos of medieval
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DEMO SOFTWARE

- ArtRage 2 (Mac and PC)
- FaceShop Pro (PC)
- Painter X (Mac and PC)
- Photoshop CS3 (Mac and PC)

RESOURCES AND EXTRAS

- Free IFX Poser model
- Charles Bernard workshop
- Free armour photos
- Free Poser Science models
- Free CG wallpapers
- Free images & textures
(15 new files plus archive)
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POSER
MODEL



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Issue 21
September 2007

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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- Keith Thompson www.keiththompsonart.com
- Katarina Sokolova www.katarinasokolova.com
- Marta Dahlig www.marta-dahlig.com
- Nick Harris http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/nickilluss_portfolio

The latest demos and resources including:

- Painter X
- Photoshop CS3
- ArtRage 2.2
- FaceShop Pro
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- Armour reference photographs

**SEE PAGE 98 FOR
FULL LISTING**

WORKSHOP COMPANION DVD

The software and
files you need!



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See individual workshop pages for files and folders

WORKSHOP FILES

High-res, multi-layered artwork from professional digital artists for you to learn from...

Use resources created by world-class artists...

Check out Aly Fell's pulp fiction comic cover work-in progress files. And then turn to page 70 for Aly's in-depth workshop.



Discover full-resolution digital artwork!

Nick Harris shows you how to produce a fantasy image for children on page 84. Find all the files and screenshots you need on the DVD.



The ImagineFX DVD

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Krzysztof Chalik

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Web: www.myspace.com/raven_dark_heart



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Web: www.digitalartwork.no



Christina Uhlman

Location: US
Web: <http://polygirl.deviantart.com>



Liz Schultz

Location: US
Web: www.lizschultz.com



Andy Dean

Location: US
Web: www.adr-flashmedia.net



Aleksei Sedov

Location: Englnad
Email: vanaheim5v@yahoo.co.uk

TOP Ten

FANTASY ART POSES

Whether you're drawing a hero or villain, we've got the top ten poses to help you out...

10 VILLAIN MAKING PLANS

With sloping shoulders and head angled slightly down, this pose is closed and still - full of calculating malice. One fist grasps the other, causing the muscles of the arms to bulge, and the feet are planted firmly on the ground.

With the arm muscles tensed, this pose hints at power that's yet to be unleashed.



Are you going to use one of these poses as the basis of a painting? Upload your work to www.imaginefx.com so we can all see your efforts!

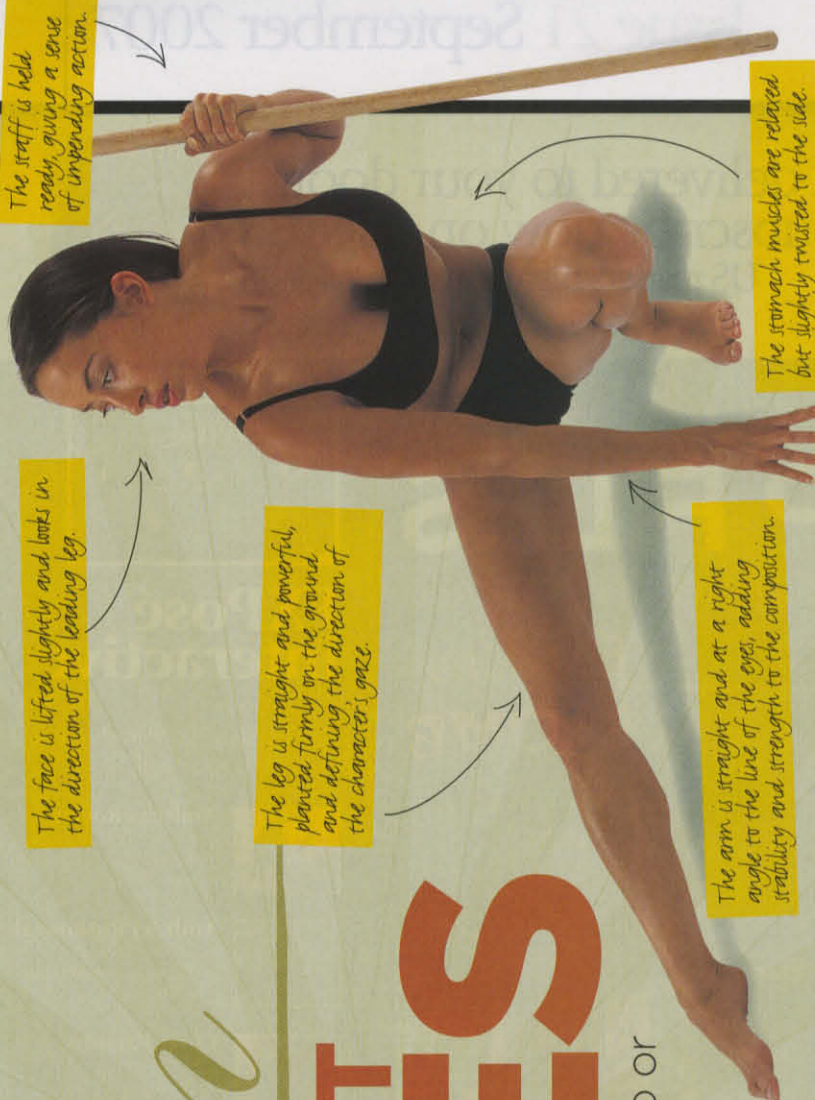
8 FLYING

The leading arm is outstretched, indicating powerful momentum. The other arm is streamlined, held close to the side. Just after the moment of lift-off, the left leg is still bent for balance.



9 WARRIOR

This is a beautifully balanced and elegant pose. The extended leg is long and straight and is at a right angle to the staff, giving the character added balance and strength. The right arm balances the body as it leans forwards, while the slope of the shoulders creates a diagonal almost parallel with the line of the leg. The staff is gripped with a strong hand, giving the pose a focal point.



The staff is held ready, giving a sense of impending action.

The face is lifted slightly and looks in the direction of the leading leg.

The leg is straight and powerful, planted firmly on the ground and defining the direction of the character's gaze.

The arm is straight and at a right angle to the line of the legs, adding stability and strength to the composition.

The stomach muscles are relaxed but slightly twisted to the side.



7 SLAYER

The shoulders are thrust back, the breast pushes forwards and the slim waist leads to the flare of the hips and a strong balanced stance. Compositionally, the weapon creates a clean line with the back leg, giving the pose a degree of equilibrium.

5 EVIL SORCERESS

The arms are raised in twin claws of menace and evil intent while the face is impassive and coolly confident. This pose suggests an imminent strike.

The face is intent and focused, looking a steely gaze upon the victim.



2 VILLAIN CREEPING

Keeping low, the torso is held parallel to the ground. The arms are ready to lurch forwards and grasp the prey.



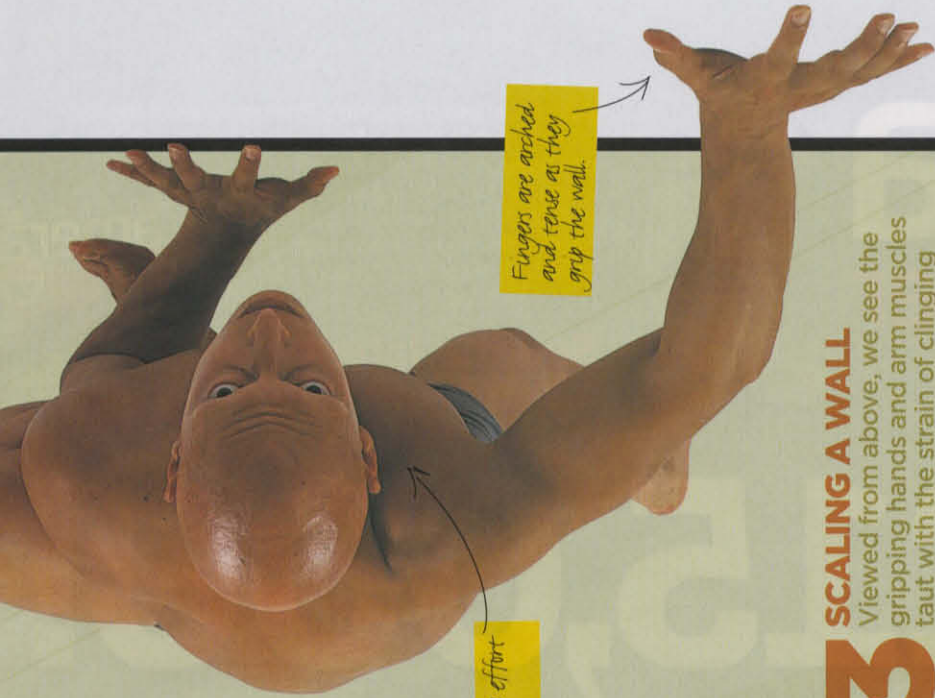
1 VICTORY

Successful in battle once again, the mighty hero raises his muscled arms and shouts his victory to the heavens.



4 WALKER IN THE WOODS

Both the left arm and left leg extend forward to suggest stillness (movement is represented by simultaneous movement of opposing arms and legs), creating a diagonal hip line and strong leg shape. The right arm pulls back, causing the shoulders to pull together.



Chest and shoulder muscles bulge with the effort of supporting the character's bodyweight.

Fingers are arched and tense as they grip the wall.

3 SCALING A WALL

Viewed from above, we see the gripping hands and arm muscles taut with the strain of clinging to the wall. The raised left leg balances the leading right arm. The upturned face and concentrated stare hint at a sense of purpose and also help create the illusion of height, as the character looks to their destination.

Reader offer

Readers can order *Anatomy For Fantasy Artists* for the special price of £12.99 (rrp £14.99) with free p&p (UK only). To order, please call the David & Charles hotline on 08709 908222 or email dcdirect@davidandcharles.co.uk and quote code A0097. Offer closes on 30 October 2007.



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15
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The latest digital art software, books and film releases...



Jeff McAteer extols the virtues of the latest ZBrush release - page 104



SOFTWARE

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The long-awaited update to the innovative sculpting app is here

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Give your Poser faces a more realistic look with this add-on

106 Studio Artist 3.5

Turn photos into all kinds of art with this Mac-only package

107 Genuine Fractals 5

Upsize images in Photoshop without loss of detail

107 Modular Science Fiction Environment

Quickly and easily set up a range of sci-fi scenes in Poser



"Exposé 5 gathers the world's best digital artists"

FILM

110 The latest DVDs

Jekyll: Season One, The Hills Have Eyes 2, Danger: Diabolik, Ghost In The Shell: Solid State Society, Excel Saga: The Complete Collection, Moon Phase: Phase One



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112 Words of wisdom

Exposé 5, Imagine Prime, Drawing in 10 Steps, DC Comics Covergirls



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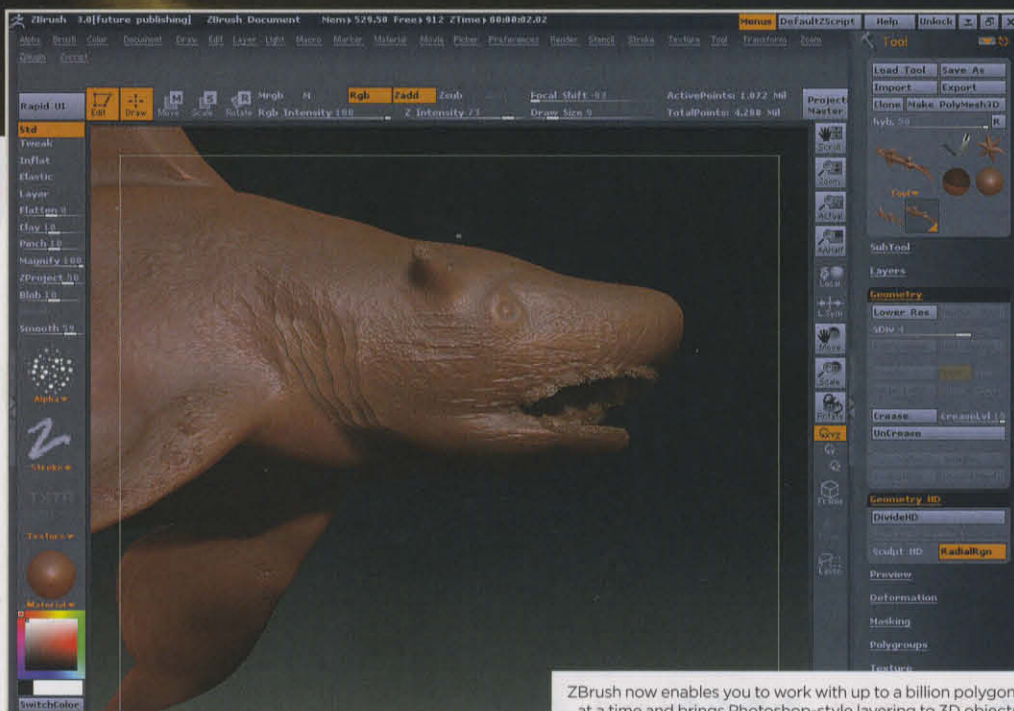
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ZBrush 3



ZBRUSH continues to wow artists with a whole new level of detail

PRICE £303 **COMPANY** Pixologic **WEB** www.pixologic.com **CONTACT** via website



ZBrush now enables you to work with up to a billion polygons at a time and brings Photoshop-style layering to 3D objects.

Among the 3D fantasy art community, ZBrush 3 is probably the most eagerly awaited software release of the year. ZBrush has turned 3D modelling from a complex and technical job into an art form with all the subtlety and control of sculpture.

Its clever approach of providing paintbrush-style tools with which you can both carve and detail complex three-dimensional shapes, along with its ability to work on models with millions of polygons in real time, has taken the modelling world by storm.

Version 3 is a big update. The interface has been tidied and reorganised, and the program has been fine-tuned to make better use of multiple processors. Models of up to a



The new Transpose tool enables you to re-pose your models quickly and easily.

billion polygons can now be worked on using HD sculpting (although you're going to have trouble exporting them to any other package). ZBrush will only display a small area of an HD model, but you can use very fine sculpting to add detail that even Bump or Normal maps can't match.

The Transpose tool is a great addition. In a couple of clicks, you can start to bend and pose your models, creating a realistic stance from a reference pose very quickly. You can also paint directly on to your model using alphas without entering Projection mode, so it's a lot easier to generate surface details such as bumps, textures or wrinkles.

In addition, Zaplink enables you to work on textures in Photoshop without

having to see them as unfolded flat objects. You can now see the textures as they appear on your model.

The new Mesh Extraction tool is great for creating objects that fit around other objects, such as clothes. Meshes can be divided into sub-tools – effectively like 3D layers – which can be turned on and off and worked on in isolation. You can also subdivide portions of your model, giving it more detail where it needs it.

ZBrush was way ahead of anything else before version 3, and this new release is a big update. If you have version 2.5 you're definitely going to want version 3. If you don't have ZBrush at all and you work in 3D, you should get this immediately. How have you managed without it? ●

DETAILS

Features

- 3D modelling and sculpting
- 2D painting tools
- 3D alpha painting
- HD geometry
- Real-time modelling
- Import and export in popular 3D file types
- Work on multiple 3D layers
- Transpose tool for re-posing models

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP
Pentium 4 processor or equivalent,
1,024MB RAM
Mac: OSX version coming soon

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

WHY I CHOOSE ZBRUSH 3

Jeff McAteer on why he's a fan of ZBrush 3

How do you describe your work?

If you asked my wife, I'm sure you'd get a "demented." If you asked my son, I would think the response would be "cool." So maybe I could sum it up as demented but cool.

What's your preferred method of working?

I don't like worrying about technical stuff while I'm trying to create. I think it impedes the creative process. What I like to do is bring in the lowest resolution cage mesh I can and just go to town in ZBrush. I don't worry about the edge loops or anything like that.

Why do you favour ZBrush?

It's just an extremely powerful tool. The interface is different from most programs, but once you get past that, ZBrush has a ton to offer!

What does ZBrush give you that other packages don't?

The most obvious thing is the ability to paint on your models, but there are others. Transpose is a good example. It's such a natural way to pose your model.

What's new in version 3 that will change the way you work?

I've been using version 3 for a while and my workflow has changed quite a bit. Big features such as SubTools, PolyPainting and Layers are the obvious ones, but some of the features that don't get such high billing have impacted my workflow. LazyMouse is a great example – at first I'd only use it to make a really precise stroke, but now I use it about a third of the time.



Jeff owns part of Reflexive Entertainment, where he's currently art director/producer on his first original video game.

www.jeffmcafee.com

FaceShop Pro

FACE MAKER Build 3D characters from a single photo

PRICE \$80 **COMPANY** Daz **WEB** www.daz3d.com **CONTACT** via website

Poser is great for generic-looking figures and characters, and you can customise them to some degree with morphs. However, if you want to create a character from a 2D drawing or a photo, grabbing the skin texture of the character from that image, things get tricky.

FaceShop Pro is a standalone package that attempts to provide a more accurate version of the poser Face Room with more tools and a more sophisticated approach. It works with any poser head (in fact, any 3D model) and requires only one image to create a likeness.

Working with FaceShop is easy enough. You simply follow the package's instructions, marking points on your photograph or image and then locating the same points on your 3D model. Once this is done you draw lines on both images to define facial features such as the shape of the nose, the lips and the eyes. FaceShop then

creates a morph that can be loaded into Poser and a texture to fit it.

We found that wrinkly, elderly faces and unusual characters worked a lot better with FaceShop than young, even-toned 'beautiful people'. The more character a face has, the easier it is to represent.

Don't think of FaceShop as a magic fix for creating photorealistic representations of people. You'll need to do a lot of tweaking of the textures in Photoshop and refining of the model in Poser. The morphs that are produced need careful adjustment as some distortion can occur. It's also hard to move back and forth along the production line to refine the lines and dots that make up the face.

However, if you're prepared to work with it, creating several morphs of the same face, re-working the texture and using combinations of morph dials, it's possible to come up with recognisable figures. In any case, FaceShop is much more usable than Poser's Face Room.

DETAILS

Features

- Create 3D faces
- Import your own 3D models
- Use any poser character as a base
- Work from a single image
- Create brand new poser morphs
- Define the face as accurately as you like

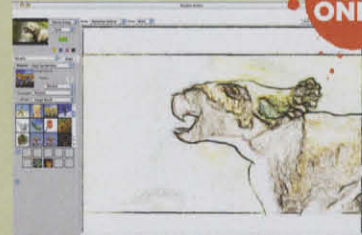
System Requirements

Windows 2000 or XP,
Pentium III or IV 2GHz,
256MB RAM

Rating



MAC ONLY



Studio Artist can take a while to "paint" an image, but it's highly controllable.

Studio Artist 3.5

PAINTING SOFTWARE
Play with a digital canvas

Price \$379

Company Synthetik

Web www.synthetik.com

Contact via website

RATING

Studio Artist is a Mac-only package for turning photos into artwork in a huge range of styles. You can use Studio Artist as a natural media paint package, sketching and painting with a mouse or graphics tablet. To this end, it boasts about 4,000 painting styles, which can be used directly or customised.

However, the program is more than just a sketchpad. You can also apply a painterly style to an entire imported image, to a selection or even to an animation. This enables you to produce painted looks while retaining artistic control over the image. Each style is resolution-independent and each is laid down stroke by stroke, which, although it can take a while, gives images a slightly more layered look than other systems.

Add to this a range of image manipulation tools and sophisticated keyframing for animation and you've got a substantial package that can be creative or automatic depending on how you use it.

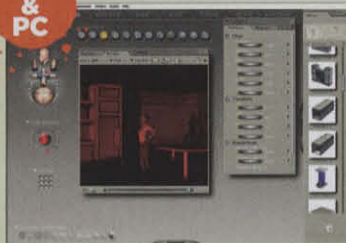
It's a little pricey unless you do a lot of work turning photos into paintings, but it's definitely more of an artist's tool than many programs offering instant painted effects.

PC ONLY



FaceShop Pro enables you to make approximations to real faces. The more realism you want, the more work you have to do.

MAC
&
PC



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Modular Science Fiction Environment

SCENE BUILDER Get that space-age look

Price \$10

Creators JHogland/mrsparky

Web <http://tinyurl.com/2865t8>

Contact via website

RATING

Modular Science Fiction Environment is a set of Poser models designed to enable you to quickly set up interior and exterior sci-fi scenes. Corridors, rooms, walls and stairs are all provided as Poser figures. This means they can be locked in place so you don't move parts of the scene by mistake. With everything scaled correctly and placed logically, it's simple to set up complex scenes.

The real beauty of the system is its modular approach – you can easily bring in or remove walls, floors and other objects to create your own set. Furniture, machinery and other objects are also provided, making this an adaptable set with lots of potential for customisation. There's little impact on performance because the models have been kept simple, and if all you need to do is sketch out a backdrop, the modular environment works well.

Texturing in the set is high quality, and if you want to re-texture, the models are generic enough to enable you to paint your own walls and floors. The set renders well in normal and global lighting, and doors can be opened or closed with simple controls.

MAC
&
PC



Genuine Fractals uses a complex algorithm to expand images while keeping them sharp.

Genuine Fractals 5

SCALING SOFTWARE Bigger pictures without loss of detail

PRICE \$159 **COMPANY** onOne Software **WEB** www.ononesoftware.com **CONTACT** via website

Computer art takes up lots of computer resources. If you're working on images for print – particularly in the case of large-scale print – this can become restrictive. A one-metre-square canvas would have to be 12,000 pixels across to print at high quality. Try feeding that figure into your 3D rendering package and you'll be waiting a long time for your pictures. Even sketching on a large canvas using a graphics tablet is likely to result in significantly reduced responsiveness.

Genuine Fractals is a Photoshop plug-in designed to upsize any image to any scale. So is this better than simply scaling it up using Photoshop's Bicubic Scaling tool? Well, yes it is. Genuine Fractals doesn't just upscale the image, it applies fractal maths to fill in detail, and adds smoothing and sharpening to improve the quality of the resized shot. Version 5 enables you to control the sharpening and noise reduction using simple sliders

and adds a new Film Grain filter to give soft images the impression of sharper detail.

The success of upsizing really depends on having a good-quality image to work with in the first place. If a picture has noise or compression artifacts, or if it's blurred, then Genuine Fractals will simply enlarge and refine the errors. This makes it ideal for working with 3D renders and pretty good with 2D paintings. Photos, which are what the software was primarily designed for, are generally more subtle, noisy and detailed, and the results aren't quite so good (although that new Film Grain filter can help).

Genuine Fractals doesn't perform miracles. The literature boasts that you can enlarge an image by 1,000 per cent, and you can. However, the results won't be the same as an original image at the proper scale. You're trying to fill in detail that was never there in the first place, so when you get beyond about 200-300 per cent on most shots, the quality will start to suffer. ●

DETAILS

Features

- Upsize images to any resolution
- Smoothing and edge refinement filters
- Add photographic grain to disguise enlargement
- Works within Photoshop

System Requirements

PC: Windows XP SP2 or Vista, .Net 2.0 framework, Photoshop CS2, CS3 or Elements 4, 512MB RAM
Mac: OS X 10.4.4 or later, Photoshop CS2, CS3 or Elements 4, 512MB RAM

Rating



Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL

ImagineFX

A monster issue! The best digital painting workshops!

Perfect comic covers

In an exclusive workshop, Marvel artist Nic Klein shows you how to design, draw and paint stylish covers.

Erotic pirates!

Jonny Duddle returns to ImagineFX with his most risqué workshop yet. Not to be missed, me 'arty!



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ISSUE 22 ON SALE TUES 28 AUGUST

Matte painting masterclass

Ever wondered how the pros create stunning film backdrops? Find out from the legend that is Alp Altiner in one of our best workshops ever!

Chris Moore

The man who brought Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? to life speaks to ImagineFX.

Image by Cole Eastburn. Learn his secrets in an exclusive workshop next issue!



All contents correct at
time of going to press



James Nesbitt is captivating as Tom Jackman, a modern-day Jekyll with a terrifying alter-ego.

Jekyll: Season One

HYDE AND SEEK You needn't be in two minds over whether to check this out – it's first-class fun

Distributor Entertainment Group **Certificate** 15 **Price** £30 **Release date** Out now

There's been a recent wave of remakes of horror classics. The BBC gave us a drab Dracula as a

Christmas present, and ITV is filming a modern-day Frankenstein. But we doubt it'll top this spin on Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 brainchild.

If you caught the first part on BBC One, but weren't moved, give Jekyll another chance. The opener left you feeling like they'd removed Hyde from the equation, but nothing could be further from the truth. And this is a series that gets better as it goes along.

The usually cuddly James Nesbitt is a revelation, transforming into a rather Joker-ish Hyde with a nice line in caustic camp. Doctor Who writer Steven Moffat's scripts are brimming with his trademark cleverness and

quotable dialogue, as well as a dash of cheeky audacity that he seems to have picked up working on Who. He plays clever games such as holding back the

backstory to the fourth episode, and there are twists and turns aplenty, right up to the closing moments of the sixth episode. Like a great conjurer, he makes it a delight to be fooled.

Transplanting the concept into a modern thriller works well. With its black vans, SWAT teams and gleaming underground bases, this is a sexy show. The update also blows the dust off Hyde,

making him dangerous again – and leaves Moffat free to bolt on all sorts of delicious SF concepts. If you like your fantasy telly stylish and quirky, this is a must-watch.

RATING



Other new releases...

A grisly sequel ups the gore, while a 60s super-thief does it in style



The Hills Have Eyes 2

Distributor 20th Century Fox
Certificate 18
Price £20
Release date Out now
RATING



An eye-gouging; a head being battered to a pulp with a rock; a man who's been crammed into a toilet bowl: these are a few of our favourite things. About this sequel, that is...

Several months after a family was attacked by cannibalistic mutants, the army have wiped out the people-eaters. But a bunch of National Guards soon discover that this is another case of declaring "mission accomplished" prematurely.

Hills 2 is more hardcore than the first film. Writer Wes Craven has obviously noted the rise of 'gorno' such as Saw, adding an icky abduction/rape subplot. Director Martin Weisz whips through his catalogue of atrocities, and there are just enough new ideas (such as Chameleon, whose rock-like skin provides camouflage) to keep gorehounds interested.



Danger: Diabolik

Distributor Paramount
Certificate 12
Price £10
Release date 13 August
RATING

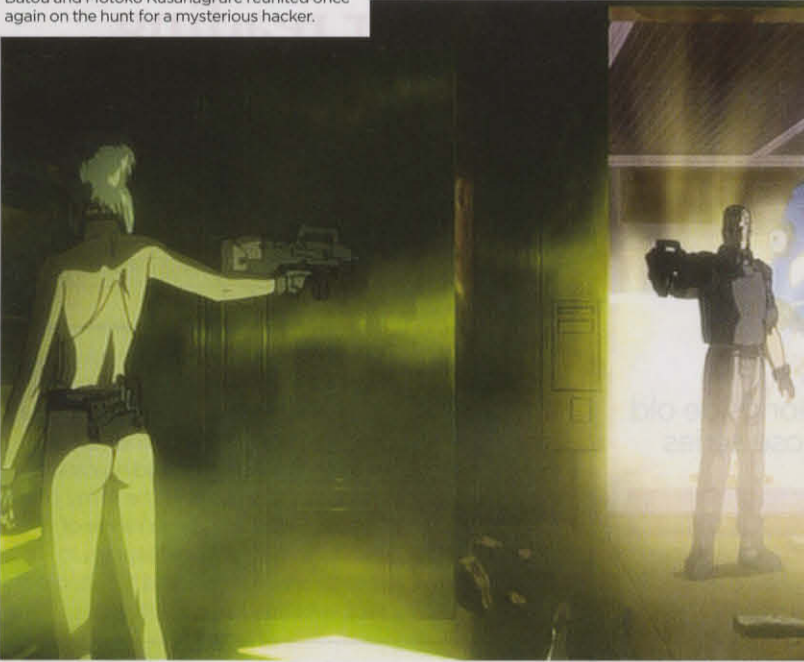
You know a film's achingly hip when the Beastie Boys base one of their videos on it. Their riff on this slice of primary-coloured pop-art pulp is an extra on this bargain-priced disc.



Mario Bava – best known for sublime horror films such as Mask of Satan – directed this anarchic 1968 adaptation of the Italian comic book about Diabolik, a super-criminal who blows up tax offices for giggles.

The 'plot' is supremely slight: Diabolik steals stuff, he's pursued by the cops, repeat. But it all looks ravishing, from the fetishistic costumes (Diabolik protects his identity with leather suits and gimp masks), to the sports cars, to the chiselled features of impossibly handsome star John Phillip Law. So adding this to your DVD collection will instantly render it ten per cent cooler. ●

Batou and Motoko Kusanagi are reunited once again on the hunt for a mysterious hacker.



Ghost in the Shell: Solid State Society

PULLING STRINGS The long-awaited follow-up to 2nd GIG finally hits DVD

Studio Manga Entertainment **Certificate** 15 **Price** £20 **Release** Out now

Two years have passed since cyborg Major Motoko Kusanagi resigned from Section Nine, a mysterious organisation that battles cyber-crime and terrorism in futuristic Japan.

Batou and Togusa are investigating a series of mysterious suicides when Batou crosses paths with the Major, who has also been following the odd deaths. The deaths are being attributed to a wizard-class hacker known only as the Puppeteer, who can hack into the cyberbrain of anyone he chooses. No one knows who he is, but the Major is Batou's prime suspect.

Featuring the same slick animation and stunning soundtrack as the Stand Alone Complex and 2nd GIG TV series, Solid State Society is a sci-fi treat for all

anime fans. There are plenty of references to the original films and even the inclusion of the Major's most famous line: 'The net is vast and infinite.'

The story is complex and multi-layered, providing a meditation on the perils of a futuristic society where the aged are kept alive by machines and children can be cybernised with just their parent's permission. There's plenty of action and this is definitely a series to ruminate over as the identity of the Puppeteer is never really revealed.

The double-disc DVD set features plenty of extras, including a stunning English dub, one of the best produced in recent years.

RATING



Also look at...

Wacky comedy adventures and spooky goings on in a haunted castle



Excel Saga: The Complete Collection

Studio JC Staff

Certificate 15

Price £20

Release date Out now

RATING

Filled to the brim with weird and wacky parodies, this 26-episode series will have anyone in stitches. The story follows the attempts of the ideological organisation ACROSS to take over F City.

ACROSS only has three members: the titular Excel, who's a hyperactive woman; Hyatt, a Martian princess who dies at least ten times each episode; and the megalomaniac Lord Illpalazzo, for whom Excel would do anything. Added to that is Excel's dog and emergency food supply, Menchi, who sings the ending credits.

Yes it sounds insane and for the most part, it is. Excel is very rarely successful in her missions. This boxset sees the return of US distributor ADV Studios' wacky Vid-Notes and an English dub, which actually manages to be better than the stellar Japanese original. If you only buy one comedy series this year, it really should be this one.



Moon Phase: Phase One

Studio JVC/Shaft

Certificate PG

Price £20

Release date Out now

RATING

Hapless photographer Kouhei Morioka is travelling in Germany taking pictures for an occult magazine - unfortunately his psychic abilities mean all his photos contain ghostly apparitions. While taking pictures of a castle, he sees a girl who instantly captures his imagination, a young vampire named Hazuki.

Trapped in the castle, Hazuki begs Kouhei to break the barrier and then attempts to bite him and make him her slave. Unfortunately, things don't quite work out that way and she ends up following him to Japan.

It's a silly series with supernatural overtones, which breathes new life into the classic anime love story. The art is nicely done and when it comes to the opening theme, Neko Mimi Mode, you will either love it hate it. Moon Phase is a good enough watch, worthy of attention with plenty of action and comedy. ●



Exposé 5

FRESH FACES New talent gets a showing alongside old hands in this sumptuous addition to the Exposé series

Editors: Daniel Wade & Paul Hellard **Publisher:** Ballistic Publishing
Price: \$55 **Web:** www.ballisticpublishing.com **ISBN:** 9781921002397

Flick through the fifth book in the respected Exposé series and you'll see numerous images by artists who've graced the pages of ImagineFX. Bobby Chiu, Melanie Delon, Cyril Van Der Haegen and Katarina Sokolova are just four of the IFX regulars whose artwork is featured, alongside modern-day legends of the fantasy genre including Dehong He and Todd Lockwood. Among these known names, of course, are plenty of artists whose work you may not have seen before. Of the 218 artists, almost half are featured for the first time.

The board who had the task of judging the 4,570 entries also included a number of recognisable names: Ryan Church, Pascal Blanché, Brom and EA senior art director Neil Eskuri, to pick a few. As always, categories are chosen after all entries have been received, and the main change from Exposé 4 is an increase in concept art entries. The top image in each of the 19 categories earns a Master Award, while between one and three images in each category receives an Excellence award. Because of the high standard of entries, a greater number of Excellence awards are given than in previous Exposés.

Exposé 5's Grand Master is John Berkey. Although not a digital artist, John is famous for his renderings of spaceships, and his career has been long and distinguished.

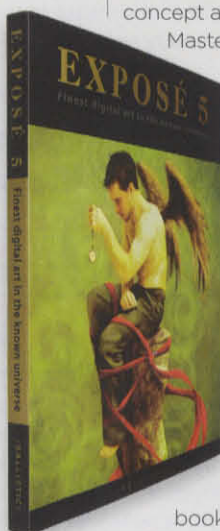
After a brief appraisal of his work, it's on to the submitted artwork, with categories including painted and rendered portraits, fantasy creatures, matte paintings, science fiction, concept art and humour. Alongside the

Master and Excellence awards, each category has about 15 or 20 entries. The talent on show is inspiring and world class, and the book is packed with beautiful, terrifying, fantastic, realistic art. You won't find any descriptions of the pieces – that's not the aim of the Exposé titles – but the index lists the websites and contact details of every featured artist.

While the standard edition is fantastic, there's also a limited edition of this book bound in black leather. This comes with eight limited issue prints, and an additional 16 pages of artwork.

As with the previous titles in this series, Exposé 5 does a fantastic job of gathering the world's best digital artists. With ever-increasing numbers of entries making the judging process harder, it's looking like you may need to buy a bigger coffee table.

RATING



Further reading...

An Imaginary Friends compendium, drawing tips and feisty DC covergirls

Imagine | Prime

Author Edmund T Shern

Publisher Imaginary FS Pte. Ltd.

Price \$60 **ISBN** 9789810585570

RATING



This book looks at the artwork created by Imaginary Friends Studio. Among the hundreds of beautiful images, there are dozens that you'll recognise, such as World of Warcraft trading cards, Iron Kingdoms art and the Army of Darkness comic. A wide range of genres from traditional fantasy to manga are featured, and the Studio's fans will find plenty of interest.

Drawing In 10 Steps

Author Ian Sidaway

Publisher Hamlyn

Price £15 **ISBN** 0600614824

RATING



Although tablets have come a long way, they still don't have the tactile feel of a pencil. As a result, grabbing some paper and scribbling ideas is one of the best ways to begin an image. This book takes a detailed look at the ten most important drawing skills you can master. Covering a wide range of pencil-based techniques, it's a great guide that even veterans will find useful.

DC Comics Covergirls

Author Louise Simonson

Publisher Universe Publishing

Price £23 **ISBN** 0789315440

RATING



As comic-book artist Adam Hughes states in his foreword: sex sells. But what this book reveals with each page is that with talented artists and writers, this idea can evolve beyond titillation. DC's covergirls are unique, potent and fun. This development began back in the late 60s, but the progression accelerates with the Vertigo titles. If you like your femmes to be fatale, then covers for Y The Last Man, 100 Bullets and Bite Club will rock your world.

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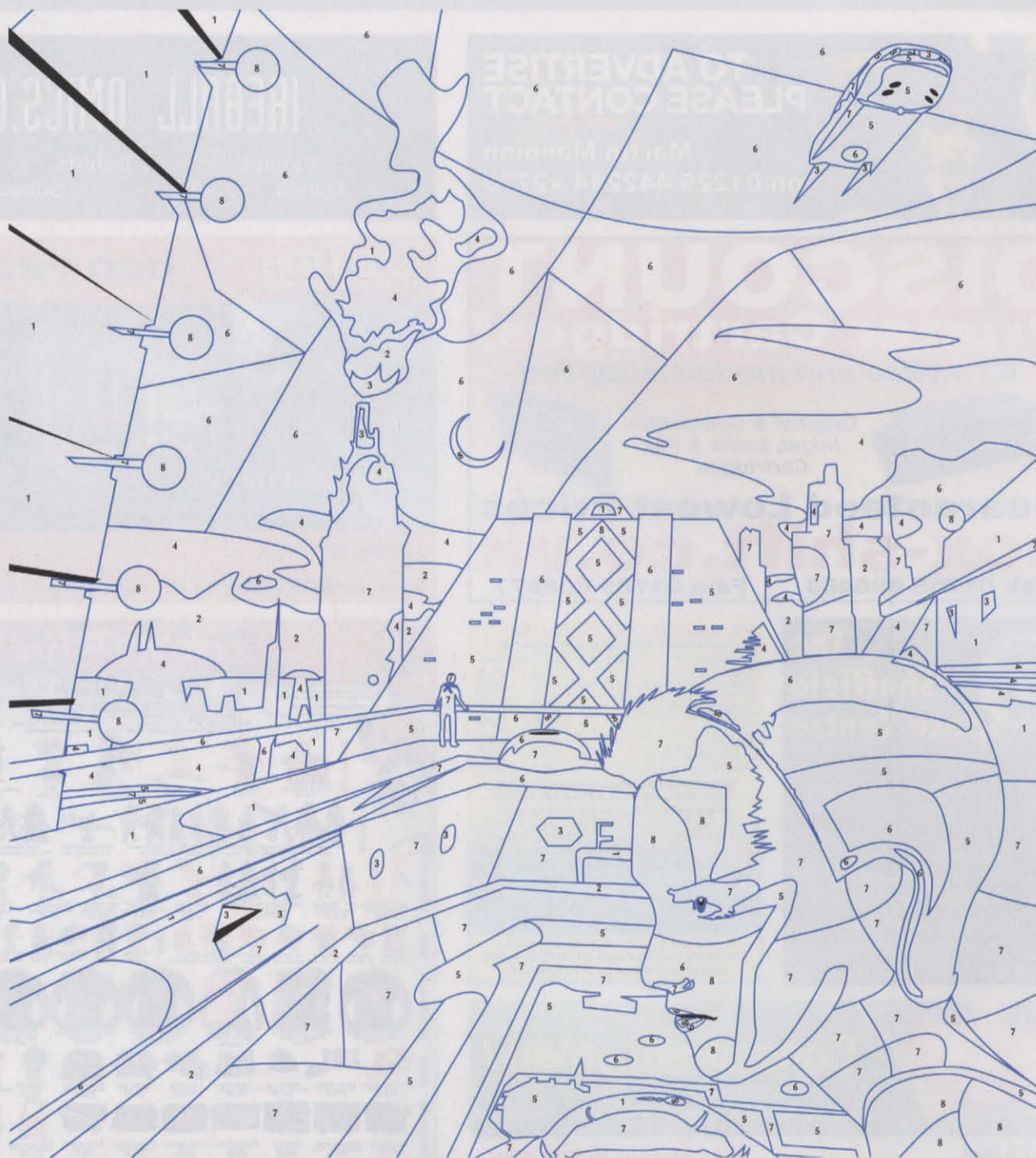
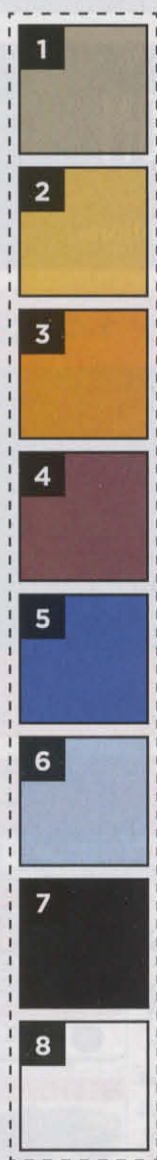
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LUGGERS, MANGA, PLAYBOY, PLAY

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NEXT MONTH: COLOURING IN



COMPETITION Can you guess which classic piece of sci-fi art this is? Simply paint the image, following the colour palette on the left, then upload it to the competition thread on our forums at www.imaginefx.com, along with the name of the artist and piece of art. The best entry wins a print signed by the artist. Competition closes 30/09/2007. Good luck!

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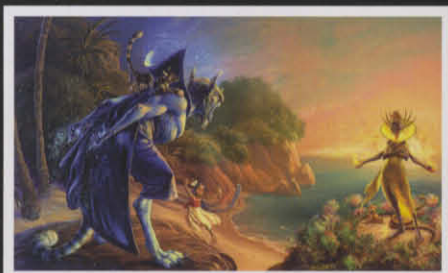
**Solutions for
Natural 3D Environments**

Workshops inside
this issue...



Custom brushes

Marta Dahlig's guide to the best
brushes for nature Page 90



Illustrating for children

Illustrate for a younger audience,
with Nick Harris Page 84



Turn to page 76

ROBOTS!
FROM SKETCH TO
FINAL CONCEPT

